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NEW YORK:

ITS

UPPER TEN

AND

LOWER MILLION.

BY GEORGE LIPPARD.

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PRELIMINARY SKETCH.

CHRISTMAS EVE, 1823, was a memorable night in the history of a certain wealthy family in New York. The night was dark and stormy, but the tempest which swept over the bay, and whitened the city's roofs with snow, was but a faint symbol of the tempest of human passion—jealousy, covetousness, despair—then at work, in the breasts of a group of individuals, connected with the old and distinguished family of VAN HUYDEN.

On that night, GULIAN VAN HUYDEN, the representative of the family, and owner of its immense wealth—a young man in the prime of early manhood, who had been happily married a year before—gave a great banquet to his male friends, in his city mansion. By his side was seated his younger brother, CHARLES VAN HUYDEN, whom the will of their father had confined to a limited income, while GULIAN, as the elder son, had become the possessor of nearly all of the immense wealth of the family.

The banquet was prolonged from about nine o'clock until near dawn, and during its progress, Gulian and his brother had been alternately absent, for the space of an hour, or a half hour at a time.

The city mansion of Gulian, situated not far from Trinity Church, flung the blaze of its festival lights out upon the stormy night. That light was not sufficient to light up the details of two widely different edifices, which, located within a hundred yards of Gulian's mansion, had much to do with his fortunes, and the fortunes of his family.

The nearest of these edifices, an antique, high-roofed house, which stood in a desolate garden, was (unknown to Gulian) the home of his brother, and of that brother's mistress—a woman whom Charles did not wish to marry, until by some chance or other, he became the possessor of the Van Huyden estate.

The other edifice, a one-storied hovel, was the home of a mechanic and his young wife. His name was JOHN HOFFMAN, his trade that of a stone mason, and at the period of this narrative, he was miserably poor.

Now, during the night of Christmas eve (and while the banquet was in progress in Gulian's city mansion), an unknown person, thickly cloaked, entered the hovel of the mechanic, bearing a new-born child in his arms. An interview followed between the unknown, John Hoffman, and his wife. The mechanic and his wife consented to adopt the child in place of one which they had recently lost. The stranger with the child, gave them a piece of parchment, which bore on one side, the initials, "G. G. V. H. C." and on the other the name of "DR. MARTIN FULMER," an eccentric physician, well known in New York. This parchment deposited in a letter addressed to Dr. Fulmer, and sent to the post office once a quarter, would be returned to the mechanic, accompanied by the sum of a hundred dollars. John was especially enjoined to keep this interview and its results a secret from the Doctor. Having deposited the child and parchment with the worthy couple, the stranger departed, and was never again seen by the mechanic or his wife.

Within an hour of this singular interview the mistress of Charles Van Huyden, returned to her home (from which she had been absent for a brief period)—flakes of snow upon her dress and upon her disordered hair—and placed upon her bed, the burden which she carried, a new-born infant, enveloped in a shawl. As the fallen, but by no means altogether depraved woman, surveyed this infant, she also beheld her own child, sleeping in a cradle not far from the bed—a daughter some three months old, and named after its mother FRANK, that is, FRANCIS VAN HUYDEN.

Christmas Eve passed away, and Christmas morning was near. Dr. Martin Fulmer was suddenly summoned to Gulian's mansion. And Gulian, fresh from the scenes of the banquet room, met the Doctor in an obscure garret of his mansion. He first bound the Doctor by an oath, to yield implicit obedience to all his wishes, an oath which appealed to all that was superstitious, as well as to all that was truly religious in the Doctor's nature, and then the interview followed, terrible and momentous in its details and its results. These results stretch over a period of twenty-one years—from December 25, 1823, to December 25, 1844. This interview over, Gulian left the Doctor (who, stupefied and awe-stricken by the words which he had just heard, sank kneeling on the floor of the room in which the interview had taken place), and silently departed from his mansion. He bent his steps to the Battery. And then—young, handsome, the possessor of enormous wealth—he left this life with the same composure, that he had just departed from his mansion. In plain words, he plunged into the river, and met the death of the SUICIDE in its ice-burdened waves, while his brother Charles (whom we forgot to state, had accompanied him from the threshold of his home), stood affrighted and appalled on the shore.

Meanwhile, Dr. Martin Fulmer (bound by his oath), descended from the garret into a bedchamber of the Van Huyden mansion. Upon the bed was stretched a beautiful but dying woman. It was Alice Van Huyden, the young wife of Gulian. All night long (while the banquet progressed in another apartment) she had wrestled in the agonies of maternity, unwatched and alone. She had given

birth to a child, but when the Dr. stood by the bed, the child had been removed by unknown hands.

Convinced of his wife's infidelity—believing that his own brother Charles was the author of his dishonor—Gulian had left his mansion, his wealth, life and all its hopes, to meet the death of the suicide in the waves of Manhattan Bay.

And Dr. Martin Fulmer, but a few hours ago a poor man, now found himself, as he stood by the bed of the dying wife, the *sole trustee* of the Van Huyden Estate.

His trust was to continue for twenty-one years. In case of his death, he had power to appoint a successor. And at the end of twenty-one years, on the 25th of December, 1844, the estate (swelled by the accumulations of twenty-one years), was, by the will of Gulian Van Huyden, to be disposed of in this wise :

I. In case a son of Gulian should appear on that day (December 25th, 1844), the estate should descend absolutely to him. Or,

II. In case on the day named, it should be proven to the satisfaction of the Trustee, that such a son had been in existence, but had met his death in a truly just cause, then the estate was to be disposed of, according to the directions embodied in a sealed codicil (which was not to be opened until December 25, 1844). But in case such a son did not appear, and in case his death in a truly just cause was not proven on the appointed day, then,

III. The estate was to be divided among the heirs of *seven* persons, descendants of the first of the Van Huyden's, who landed on Manhattan Island, in the year 1623. These seven persons, widely distributed over the United States, were (by the directions of the Testator) to be furnished with a copy of the will. And among these seven or their heirs—that is, those of the number who appeared before Martin Fulmer, at the appointed place on the appointed day—the estate would be divided.

Such in brief, were the essential features of the will.

A few days after December 25, 1823, Charles Van Huyden, having in his position \$200,000 (given to him by Dr. Martin Fulmer, in accordance with the wishes of Gulian) left New York for Paris, taking with him his mistress (now his wife), their child "Francis" or "Frank," and the strange child which the woman had brought to her home, on Christmas Eve, 1823. Whether this "strange" child, or the child left with the poor mechanic, was the offspring of Gulian Van Huyden, will be seen from the narrative which follows this imperfect sketch.

Twenty-one years pass away; it lacks but a day or two of December 25th, 1844. Who are the seven heirs? Does a son of Gulian live? What has become of Charles Van Huyden; of Hoffman the mechanic, and of the child left in the care of the mechanic? What has become of Charles Van Huyden's wife and child?

On a night in December 1844—say the 23d of the month—we shall find in New York, the following persons, connected with the fortunes of the Van Huyden family:

The "SEVEN" or their heirs.

- I. GABRIEL GODLIKE, a statesman, who with an intellect rivaling some of the greatest names in our history, such as Clay, Calhoun or Webster, is destitute of the patriotism and virtues of these great men.
- II. HERMAN BARNHURST, a clergyman, who has lured from Philadelphia to New York, the only daughter of a merchant of the former city. This clergyman and his victim, are pursued by the Third of the Seven.
- III. ARTHUR DERMOYNE, a mechanic.
- IV. ISRAEL YORKE, a Banker.
- V. HARRY ROYALTON, OF HILL ROYAL, S. C. His claim to an undivided seventh of the Estate, will be contested by his half brother and sister, RANDOLPH and ESTHER, who although white, are alleged to have African blood in their veins.
- VI. BEVERLY BARRON, a "man of the world."
- VII. EVELYN SOMERS, a New York "Merchant Prince."

2d. We shall find in New York, at the period before named, CHARLES VAN HUYDEN, transformed into COL. TARLETON, and endeavoring to remove from his hands the blood of a man whom he has slain in a duel. His daughter "FRANK" grown to womanhood, and brought into contact with "NAMELESS," who left in infancy at the hovel of John Hoffman, has after a childhood of terrible hardships—a young manhood darkened by madness and crime—suddenly appeared in New York, in company with a discharged convict. This convict is none other than John Hoffman the mechanic. And gliding through the narrative, and among its various actors, we shall find MARTIN FULMER, or his successor.

With this preliminary sketch—necessarily brief and imperfect, for it covers a period of twenty-one years—the following narrative is submitted to the reader. Yet first, let us for a moment glance at the "VAN HUYDEN ESTATE." This estate in 1823, was estimated at two millions of dollars. What is it in 1844?

The history of two millions of dollars in twenty-one years! Two millions left to go by itself, and ripen year after year, into new power, until at last the original sum is completely forgotten in the vast accumulation of capital. In the Old World twenty-one years glide by, and everything is the same. At the end of twenty-one years, two millions would still be two millions. Twenty-one years in the New World is as much as two centuries to the Old. The vast expanse of land; the constant influx of population; the space for growth afforded by institutions as different from those of Europe (that is from those of the past), as day from night—all contribute to this result. From 1823 to 1844, the New World, hardened by a childhood of battle and martyrdom, sprang into strong manhood. Behold the philosophy of modern wealth, manifested in the growth of the Van Huyden Estate. Without working itself it bids others to work. Left to the age, to the growth of the people, the increase of commerce and labor, it swells into a wealth that puts the Arabian Nights to shame. In 1823 it comprises certain pieces of land in the

heart of New York, and in the open country beyond New York. In 1844 the city land has repeated its value by a hundred; the country lots have become the abiding place of the Merchant Princes of New York. Cents in 1823, become dollars in 1844. This by the progress of the age, by the labor of the millions, and without one effort on the part of the lands or their owner. In 1823 there is a country seat and farm on the North River; in 1844 the farm has become the seat of factories, mills, the dwelling place of five thousand tenants, whose labor has swelled the original value of \$150,000 into ten millions of dollars. In 1823, five thousand acres, scattered over the wild west, are vaguely valued at \$5000—in 1844 these acres, located in various parts of the west, are the sites of towns, villages, mines, teeming with a dense population, and worth thirty millions of dollars. In 1823 a tract of barren land among the mountains of Pennsylvania, is bought for one thousand dollars; in 1844 this tract, the location of mines of iron and coal, is worth TWENTY MILLIONS.

Thus in twenty-one years, by *holding on to its own*, the Van Huyden Estate has swelled from TWO MILLIONS to ONE HUNDRED MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. The age moves on; it remains in its original proprietorship, swelled by the labor of millions, who derive but a penny where they bestow upon the estate a dollar. It works not; mankind works for it. Has this wealth no duties to mankind? Is there not something horrible in the thought of an entire generation, for mere subsistence, spending their lives, in order to make this man, this estate, or this corporation, the possessor of incredible wealth?

PROLOGUE.

THE lamp has gone out in the old familiar room! It used to shine, late at night upon the books, upon the pictures on the wall, and upon my face as I sat writing there! Oftentimes it shone upon another face which looked over my shoulder, and cheered me in my labor. But now the lamp has gone out—and forever. The face which looked upon me is gone; the coffin lid shut down upon it one Summer day! The room is dark forever. And the next room, where she used to sleep with her children—it is dark and still! The house is desolate! There are no voices to break its stillness! Her voice, and the voices of our children, are silent forever on this lower earth. My heart goes back to that house and to its rooms, and to the voices that once sounded there, and the faces which once made it glad, and with more than the bitterness of Death I confess, *that Time can never return*. Nevermore, nevermore, nevermore! Wealth may come; change of scene may deaden sorrow; wrestling with the world, may divert the soul from perpetual brooding, but the Truth is still the Truth, *that Time can never return*. And this is the end of all, after a life spent in perpetual battle—after toiling day and night for long years—after looking to the Future, hoping, struggling, suffering—to find at last, even before thirty years are mine, that the lamp has gone out, and forever! That those for whom I toiled and suffered—whose well-being was the impulse and the ultimate of all my exertions—are no longer with me, but gone to return never—nevermore. Upon this earth the lamp that lit my way through life, has indeed gone out, and forever. But is it not lighted now by a higher hand than mortal, and is it not shining now in a better world than this?

Once more I resume my pen. Since this work was commenced, Death has been busy with my home—death hath indeed laid my home desolate. It is a selfish thing to write for money, it is a base and a mean thing to write for fame, but it is a good and a holy thing to write for the approval of those whom we most intensely

love. Deprived of this spring of action, it is hard, very hard to take up the pen once more. Write, write ! but the face that once looked over your shoulder, and cheered you in your task, shall look over it no more. Write, write ! and turn your gaze to every point of the horizon of life—not one face of home meets your eye.

Take up the pen once more. Banish the fast gathering memories—choke them down. Forget the ACTUAL of your own life, in the ideal to which the pen gives utterance. Brave old pen ! Always trusted, never faithless ! True through long years of toil, be true and steadfast now ; when the face that once watched your progress is sleeping in graveyard dust. And when you write down a noble thought, or give utterance to a holy truth, may be, that face will smile upon your progress, even through the darkened glass which separates the present from the Better World.

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NEW YORK:

ITS

UPPER-TEN AND LOWER MILLION.

PART FIRST.

"FRANK VAN HUYDEN."

DEC. 23, 1844.—EVENING.

CHAPTER I.

"DOES HE REMEMBER?"

"Does he remember?" was the exclamation of Frank, as concealing the history of the Life of NAMELESS within her bosom, a singular expression flashed over her beautiful face. "Does he remember?" was her thought—"Is he conscious of the words which have fallen from his lips? Does he pass from this singular state of trance, only to forget the real history of his life?"

The agitation which had convulsed the face of Nameless, at the moment when he emerged from the clairvoyant state (if thus we may designate it) soon passed away. His face became calm and almost radiant in its every line. His eyes, no longer glassy, shone with clear and healthy light; a slight flush animated his hitherto sallow cheeks; in a word, his countenance, in a moment, underwent a wonderful change.

Frank uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Ah! I begin to live!" said Nameless, passing his hand over his forehead—"Yes, yes," he uttered, with a sigh of mingled sorrow and delight, "I have risen from the grave. For two years the victim of a living death, I now begin to live. The cloud is gone; I see, I see the light!"

He rose and confronted Frank.

"There was another child—yes, my mother gave birth to two children, one of whom your father stole on the night of its birth and reared as his own. His purpose you may guess. But what has become of that child? It disappeared, I know, at the time when your father arrived from Paris—*disappeared*, ha, ha, Frank! Did it not *disappear* to rise into light again, on the 25th

of December, 1844, as the *only child* of GULIAN VAN HUYDEN? Your father is a bold gamester; he plays with a fearless hand!"

He paced the room, while Frank, listening intently to his words, watched with dumb wonder the delight which gave a new life to his countenance.

"And Cornelius Berman, Frank—" he turned abruptly.

"Died last year."

His countenance fell.

"And Mary—"

"Followed her father to the grave."

He fell back upon the sofa like a wounded man. It was some moments before he recovered the appearance of calmness.

"How knew you this?"

"A year ago, an artist reduced to poverty, through the agency of Israel Yorke, came to my home to paint my portrait. It was Cornelius Berman. Yorke had employed Buggles as his agent in the affair of the transfer of the property of Cornelius; Buggles the agent was dead indeed, but Yorke appeared upon the scene, as the principal, and sold Cornelius out of house and home. The papers which you took from the dead body of Buggles were only copies; the originals were in the possession of Israel Yorke."

Nameless hid his face in his hands. He did not speak again until many minutes had elapsed.

"And you thought that Cornelius had put Buggles to death?"

"I gathered it from a rumor which has crept through New York for the last two years. The haggard face and wandering eye of the dying artist, who painted my picture, confirmed this impression."

"And Cornelius came to this house?"

"No; to another house, where I had been placed by my father. He procured a person to represent a southern gentleman, and personate my father. That is, I was represented as the only child of a rich southerner; and in that capacity my picture was painted, and—and—I afterward visited the home of the artist, in a miserable garret, and saw his daughter, who assisted her father, by the humblest kind of work. She was a 'seamstress'—she worked for 'sixteen cents per day.'"

"And she is dead," said Nameless, in a low voice.

"I lost sight of Mary and her father about a year ago, and have since received intelligence of their death."

"How did you receive this intelligence?"

"It was in all the papers. Beverly Barron wrote quite a touching poem upon the Death of the Artist and his Daughter. Beverly, you are aware, was eloquent upon such occasions: the death of a friend was always a godsend to him."

Nameless did not reply, but seemed for a moment to surrender himself to the influence of unalloyed despair.

"Look you, Frank," he said, after a long pause, "I have seventy-one thousand dollars—"

"Seventy-one thousand dollars!" she ejaculated.

"Yes, and it is 'FRANK AND NAMELESS AND NINETY-ONE AGAINST THE WORLD.' Tomorrow is the 24th of December; the day after will be THE DAY. We must lay our plans; we must track Martin Fulmer to his haunt; we must foil your father, and, in a word, show the world that its cunning can be baffled and its crime brought to justice, by the combination of three persons—a Fallen Woman, a Convict and a Murderer! O, does it not make your heart bound to think of the good work we can do with seventy-one thousand dollars!"

She gave him her hand, quietly, but her dark eye answered the excitement which flashed from every line of his countenance.

"And will it not be a glorious thing for us, if we can wash away our crimes—yes, Frank, our crimes—and show the world what virtue

lurks in the breast of the abandoned and the lost?"

"Then I can atone for the crime of which I am guilty—for I am guilty of being the child of a man who sold me into shame—you are guilty of having stained your hands in the blood of a wretch who cursed the very air which he breathed—and Ninety-One, is guilty, yes guilty of having once been in—*my father's way*. These are terrible crimes, Gulian—"

"Call me not by that name until the 25th of December," exclaimed Nameless.

At this moment, Frank turned aside and from the drawer of a cabinet, drew forth a long and slender vial, which she held before the eyes of Nameless.

"And if we fail, this will give us peace. It is a quiet messenger, Gulian. Within twelve hours after the contents of this vial have passed the lips, the body will sink into a peaceful sleep, without one sign or token to tell the tale of suicide. Yes, Gulian, if we fail, this vial, which I procured with difficulty, and which I have treasured for years, will enable us to fall asleep in each other's arms, and—forever!"

"Suicide!" echoed Nameless, gazing now upon the vial, then upon her countenance, imbued with a look of somber enthusiasm—"You have thought of that?"

"O had this vial been mine, in the hour when, pure and hopeful, I was sold into the arms of shame, do you think that for an instant I would have hesitated between the death that lays you quietly asleep in the coffin, and that death which leaves the body living, while it cankers and kills the soul?"

Nameless took the vial from her hand and regarded it long and ardently. O what words can picture the strange look, which then came over his face! He uttered a deep sigh and placed the vial in her hands again. She silently placed it in the drawer of the cabinet.

As she again confronted him, their eyes met,—they understood each other.

"Frank," said Nameless in a measured tone—"Who owns this house? What is its true character?"

Seating herself beside him on the sofa she replied:

"As to the owner of this house, you may

be sure that he is a man of property and moral worth, a church-member and a respectable citizen. But do not imagine for a moment that this is a common haunt of infamy—no, my friend, no! None but the most select, the most aristocratic, ever cross the threshold of this place. Remain until twelve o'clock to-night and you will behold some of the guests who honor my house with their presence."

There was a mocking look upon her face as she gave utterance to these words. She beat the carpet with her slipper and grasped the cross which rested on her bosom with a nervous and impatient clutch.

"At twelve to-night!" echoed Nameless, and looked into her face. "I will remain;" and once more his whole being was enveloped in the magnetic influence which flowed from the eyes of the lost woman.

CHAPTER II.

FRANK AND HER SINGULAR VISITOR.

It will soon fall to our task to depict certain scenes, which took place in the Empire City on the 23d of December, between nightfall and midnight. The greater portion of these scenes will find their legitimate development in "THE TEMPLE," from midnight until morning; while others will lift the "Golden Shroud" and uncover to our gaze threads and arteries of that great social heart of New York, which throbs with every pang of unutterable misery, or dilates and burns with every pulse of voluptuous luxury.

Ere we commence our task, let us look in upon a scene which took place in the house of Frank, about nightfall and (of course) before Nameless had sought refuge in her room.

Frank was sitting alone, in a quiet room near a desk upon which pen and ink and papers were spread. It was the room devoted to the management of her household affairs. She sat in an arm-chair, with her feet on a stool and her back to the window, while she lifted the golden cross and regarded it with an absent gaze. The white curtains of the windows were turned to crimson by the reflection of the setting sun, and the warm glow shining through the intervals of her black hair, which fell loosely on her shoulders, rested warmly upon her cheek.

Her whole attitude was that of reverie or dreamy thought.

While thus occupied, a male servant, dressed in rich livery, entered, and addressed his mistress in these words:

"Madam, he wishes to see you."

"He! Whom do you mean?" said Frank, raising her eyes but without changing her position.

"That queer stranger, who never gives his name,—who has been here so often within the last three weeks,—I mean the one who wears the blue cloak with ever-so-many capes."

Frank started up in her chair.

"Show him in," she said,—“Yet stay a moment, Walker. Are all the arrangements made for to-night?”

"Everything has been done, precisely as Madam ordered it to be done," said the servant obsequiously.

He then retired and presently the visitor entered. The room is wrapped in twilight and we cannot trace the details of his appearance clearly, for he seats himself in the shadow, opposite Frank. We can discern, however, that his tall form, bent with age, is clad in a blue cloak with numerous capes, and he wears a black fur hat with ample brim. He takes his seat quietly, and rests his hand upon the head of his cane.

Not a word was spoken for several minutes. Each seemed to be waiting for the other to commence the conversation. Frank at last broke the embarrassing stillness.

"Soh! you are here again."

"Yes, madam," replied the stranger in a harsh but not unmusical voice, "according to appointment."

"It is now three weeks since we first met," said Frank. "You purchased this house of the person from whom I leased it, some three weeks ago. But I have a lease upon it which has yet one year to run. You desire, I believe, to purchase my lease, and enter at once upon possession? Well, sir, I am resolved not to sell."

Without directly replying to her question, the man in the cloak with many capes replied—

"We did not meet three weeks ago for the first time," he said. "Our first meeting was long before that period."

"What mean you?" said Frank raising her eyes and endeavoring, although vainly, to pierce the gloom which enshrouded the stranger. "O, it is getting dark. I will ring for lights."

"Before you ring for lights, a word,—" the stranger's voice sank but Frank heard every word,—"we met for the first time at a funeral—"

"At a funeral!"

"At a funeral; and after the funeral I had the body taken up privately and ordered a *post mortem* examination to be made. Upon that body, madam,——" he paused.

"Well, sir?" Frank's voice was tremulous.

"Upon that body I discovered traces of a fatal although subtle poison."

Again he paused. Frank made no reply. Even in the dim light it might be seen that her head sank slowly on her breast. Did the words of the stranger produce a strong impression? We cannot see her face, for the room is veiled in twilight.

"This darkness grows embarrassing," he said, "will you ring for lights?"

She replied with a monosyllable, uttered in a faint voice,—"No!" she said, then a dead stillness once more ensued, which continued until the stranger again spoke.

"In regard to the lease, madam. Do you agree to sell, and upon the terms which I proposed when I was here last?"

Again Frank replied with a monosyllable. "Yes!" she faintly said.

"And the other proposition: to-night you hold some sort of festival in this place. I desire to know the names of all your guests; to introduce such guests as I choose within these walls; to have, for one night only, a certain control over the internal economy of this place. In case you consent to this proposition, I will pay you for the lease double the amount which I have already offered, and promise, on my honor, to do nothing within these walls to-night, which can in the slightest degree harm or compromise you."

He stated his proposition slowly and deliberately. Frank took full time to ponder upon every word. Simple as the proposition looked, well she knew, that it might embrace results of the most important nature.

"Must I consent?" she said, and her voice faltered. "It is hard—"

"Must' is no word in the case, madam," answered that stern even voice. "Use your own will and pleasure."

"But the request is so strange," said Frank, "and suppose I grant it? Who can tell the consequences?"

"It is singular," said the stranger as though thinking aloud; "to what an extent the art of poisoning was carried in the middle ages! The art has long been lost,—people poison each other bunglingly now-a-days,—although it is said, that the secret of a certain poison, which puts its victims quietly to sleep, leaving not the slightest tell-tale trace or mark, has survived even to the present day."

Certainly the stranger had a most remarkable manner of thinking aloud.

Frank spoke in a voice scarcely audible:

"I consent to your proposition."

She rose, and although it was rapidly getting quite dark, she unlocked a secret drawer of her desk, and drew from thence two packages.

"This way, sir," she spoke in a low voice, and the stranger rose and approached her. "Here you will find the names of all my guests, and especially of those who will come here to-night. You will find such other information as may be useful to you and aid your purposes." She placed the package in his hand. "I will place Walker and the other servants under your command." She paused, and resumed after an instant, in a firmer voice: "If I have yielded to your request, it has not been altogether from fear,—"

"Fear! Who spoke of fear?"

"Don't mock me. I have yielded from fear, but not altogether from fear. I have nursed a hope that you can aid me to quit this thrice accursed life which I now lead. For though your polite manner only thinly veils insinuations the most deadly, yet I believe you have a heart. I feel that when you know all of my past life, *all*, you will think, I do not say better of me, but differently, from what you do now. Here, take this package,—it contains my history written by my own hand, and only intended to be read after my

death—but you may read it now or at your leisure.”

The man in the cloak took the package; his voice trembled when he spoke—

“Girl, you shall not regret this confidence. I will aid you to quit this accursed life.”

“Leave me for a few moments. I wish to sit alone and think for a little while. After that we will arrange matters in regard to the festival to-night.”

The stranger in the cloak left the room, bearing with him the two packages, one of which embraced the mysteries of the house of Frank, and the other contained the story of her life.

And in the darkness, Frank walked up and down the room, pressing one clenched hand against her heaving bosom, and the other against her burning brow.

Soon afterward, Frank and the stranger in the old-fashioned cloak, were closeted for half an hour in earnest conversation.

We will not record the details of the conversation, but its results will perchance be seen in the future pages of our history.

Here, at this point of our story, let us break the seals of the *second* package which Frank gave to the stranger, and linger for a little while upon the pages of her history, written by her own hand. A strange history in every line! It is called *The History of THE MIDNIGHT QUEEN!*

CHAPTER III.

THE CHILDHOOD OF THE MIDNIGHT QUEEN.

My childhood's home! O, is there in all the world a phrase so sweet as this, “My childhood's home!” Others may look back to childhood, and be stung by bitter memories, but my childhood was the heaven of my life. As from the hopeless present, I gaze back upon it, I seem like a traveler, half way up the Alps, surrounded by snow and clouds and mist, and looking back upon the happy valley, which, dotted with homes and rich in vines and flowers, smiles in the sunshine far below.

My childhood's home was very beautiful. It was a two-story cottage, situated upon an eminence, its white front and rustic porch, half hidden by the horse-chesnut trees, which in the early summer had snowy blos-

soms among their deep green leaves. Behind the cottage arose a broad and swelling hill, which, fringed with gardens at its base, and crowned on its summit by a few grand old trees standing alone against the sky, was in summer-time clad along its entire extent with a garment of golden wheat. Beneath the cottage flowed the Neprehaun, a gentle rivulet, which wound among abrupt hills,—every hill rich in foliage and dotted with homes—until it lost itself in the waves of the Hudson. Yes, the Hudson was there, grand and beautiful and visible always from the cottage porch; the Palisades rising from its opposite shore into heaven, and the broad bay of Tapaan Zee glistening in sunlight to the north.

O, that scene is before me now—the cottage with its white front, half hidden by broad green leaves intermingled with white blossoms,—the hill, which rose behind it, golden with wheat,—the Neprehaun below, winding among the hills, now in sunshine, now in shadow,—the Hudson, with its vast bay and the somber wall which rose into the sky from its western shore,—it is before me now, with the spring blossoms, the voices, the sky, the very air of my childhood's days.

In this home I found myself at the age of thirteen. I was the pupil and the charge of the occupant of the cottage, a retired clergyman, the Rev. Thomas Walworth, who having grown gray in the active service of his Master, had come there to pass his last days in the enjoyment of competence and peace. Even now, as on the day when I left him forever, I can see his tall form, bent with age and clad in black, his mild, pale face, with hair as white as snow,—I can hear that voice, whose very music was made up of the goodness of a heart at peace with God and man. When I was thirteen, myself, the good clergyman, and an aged woman—the housekeeper—were the only occupants of the cottage. His only son was away at college. And when I was thirteen, my mother, who had placed me in the care of the clergyman years before, came to see me. I shall never forget that visit. I was sitting on the cottage porch—it was a June-day—the air was rich with fragrance and blossoms—my book was on my knee—when I heard her step in the garden-walk. She was

tall and very beautiful, and richly clad in black, and her dark attire shone with diamonds. Very beautiful, I say, although there were threads of silver in her brown hair, and an incessant contraction of her dark brows, which gave a look of anxiety or pain to her face.

As she came up the garden-walk, pushing aside her veil of dark lace, I knew her, although I had not seen her for three years. Her presence was strange to me, yet still my heart bounded as I saw her come.

"Well, Frank," she said, as though it was but yesterday since I had seen her, "I have come to see you,"—she kissed me warmly on the lips and cheeks.—"Your father is dead, my child."

A tear stood in her dark eye, a slight tremor moved her lip—that was all. My father dead! I can scarcely describe the emotions which these words caused. I had not seen my father for years. There was still a memory of his face present with me, coupled with an indistinct memory of my early childhood, passed in a city of a foreign land, and a dim vision of a voyage upon the ocean. And at my mother's words there came up the laughing face and sunny hair of my brother Gulian, who had suddenly disappeared about the time my parents returned from Paris, and just before I had been placed in the charge of the good clergyman. These mingling memories arose at my mother's words, and although the good clergyman stood more to me in the relation of a father than my own father, still I wept bitterly as I heard the words, "Your father is dead, my child."

My mother, who seemed to me like one of those grand, rich ladies of whom I had read in story-books, seated herself beside me on the cottage porch.

"You are getting quite beautiful, Frank," she said, and lifted my sunbonnet and put her hand through the curls of my hair, which was black as jet. "You will be a woman soon." She kissed me, and then as she turned away, I heard her mutter these words which struck me painfully although then I could not understand them: "A woman! with your mother's beauty for your dowry and your mother's fate for your future!"

The slight wrinkle between her brows grew deeper as she said these words.

"You will be a woman, and must have an education suitable to the station you will occupy," continued my mother, drawing me quietly to her, and surveying me earnestly. "Now what do *they* teach you here?"

She laughed as I gravely related the part which good old Alice—the housekeeper—took in my education. Old Alice taught me all the details of housekeeping; to sow, to knit, the fabrication of good pies, good butter, and good bread; the mystery of the preparation of various kinds of preserves; in fact, all the details of housekeeping as she understood it. And the good, old dame, with her high cap, clear, bright little eyes, sharp nose, and white apron strung with a bundle of keys, always concluded her lesson with a mysterious intimation that, saving the good Mr. Walworth only, all the men in the world were monsters, more dangerous than the bears which ate up the bad children who mocked at Elijah.

Laughing heartily as she heard me gravely enter into all these details, which I concluded with, "You see, mother, I'm quite a housekeeper already!" she continued:

"And what does *he* teach you, my dear?"

The laughter which animated her face, was succeeded by a look of vague curiosity as I began my answer. But as I went on, her face became sad and there were tears in her eyes.

My father (as I had learned to call the good clergyman) taught me to read, to write, and to cipher. He gradually disclosed to me (more by his conversation than through the medium of books) the history of past ages; the wonders of the heavens above me, the properties of the plants and flowers that grew in my path. And oftentimes by the bright wood-fire in winter, or upon the porch under the boughs, in the rich twilight of the summer scenery—while the stars twinkled through the leaves, or the Hudson glistened in the light of the rising moon—he had talked to me of God. Of his love for all of us, his providence watching the sparrow's fall, his mercy reaching forth its almighty arms to the lowest of earth's stricken children. Of the other world, which stretches beyond the shores of the present,

not dim and cloud-shadowed, but rich in the sunlight of eternal love, and living with the realities of a state of being in which there shall be no more sickness nor pain, and tears shall be wiped from every eye, and all things be made new.

Of the holy mother watching over her holy child, while the stars shone in upon his humble bed in the manger,—of that child, in early boyhood, sitting in the temple confounding grave men, learned in the logic of the world, by the simple intuitions of a heart filled with the presence of God,—of the way of life led by that mother's child, when thirty years had set the seal of the divine manhood on his brow. How after the day's hard travel, he stopped to rest at the cottage home of Martha and Mary,—how he took up little children and blessed them,—how the blind began to see, the deaf to hear, the dead to live, at sound of his voice,—how on the calm of evening, in a modest room, he took his last supper with the Twelve, John resting on his bosom, Judas scowling in the background,—how, amid the olives of Gethsemane, at dead of night, while his disciples slept, he went through the unutterable agony alone until an angel's hand wiped the sweat of blood from his brow,—how he died upon the felon's tree, the heavens black above him, the earth beneath him dark with the vast multitude,—and how, on the clear Sabbath morn he rose again, and called the faithful woman, who had followed him to the sepulcher, by the name which his mother bore, spoken in the old familiar tone—“Mary!” How he walked the earth in bodily form eighteen hundred years ago, shedding the presence of God around him, and even now he walked it still in spiritual body, shedding still upon sin-stricken and sorrowing hearts the presence and the love of God the Father. Lessons such as these, the good clergyman, my father (as I called him) taught me, instructing me always to do good and lead a life free from sin, not from fear of damnation or hell, but because goodness is *growth*, a good life is *happiness*. A flower shut out from the light is *damned*: it cannot grow. An evil life here or hereafter is in itself *damnation*; for it is *want of growth*, paralysis or decay of all the nobler faculties.

As in my own way, and with such words as I could command, I recounted the manner in which the good clergyman educated me, my mother's face grew sad and tearful. She did not speak for some minutes; her gaze was downcast, and through her long dark eyelashes the tears began to steal.

“A dream,” she muttered, “only a dream! Did he know mankind and know but a portion of their unfathomable baseness, he would see the impossibility of making them better, would feel the necessity of an actual hell, black as the darkest that a poet ever fancied.”

As she was thus occupied in her own thoughts, a step—a well-known step—resounded on the garden-walk, and the good clergyman advanced from the wicket-gate to the porch. Even now I see that pale face, with the white hair and large clear eyes!

He advanced and took my mother cordially by the hand, and was much affected when he heard of my father's death. My mother thanked him warmly for the care which he had taken of her child.

“This child will be a woman soon, and she must be prepared to enter upon life with all the accomplishments suitable to the position which she will occupy,” continued my mother; “I wish her to remain with you until she is ready to enter the great world. But she must have proper instruction in music and dancing. She must not be altogether a wild country girl, when she goes into society. But, however, my dear Mr. Walworth, we will talk of this alone.”

Young as I was I could perceive that there was a mystery about my mother, her previous life, or present position, which the good clergyman did not feel himself called upon to penetrate.

She took his arm and led him into the cottage, and they conversed for a long time alone, while I remained upon the porch, buried in a sort of dreamy revery, and watching the white clouds as they sailed along the summer sky.

“I shall be absent two years,” I heard my mother's voice, as leaning on the good clergyman's arm she again came forth upon the porch; “see that when I return, in place of this pretty child you will present to me a beautiful and accomplished lady.”

She took me in her arms and kissed me, while Mr. Walworth exclaimed :

"Indeed, my dear madam, I can never allow myself to think of Frances' leaving this home while I am living. She has been with me so long—is so dear to me—that the very thought of parting with her, is like tearing my heart-strings!"

He spoke with undisguised emotion; my mother took him warmly by the hand, and again thanked him for the care and love which he had lavished on her child.

At length she said "Farewell!" and I watched her as she went down the garden-walk to the wicket gate, and then across the road, until she entered a by-path which wound among the hills of the Neprehaun into the valley below. She was lost to my sight in the shadows of the foliage. She emerged to view again far down the valley, and I saw her enter her grand carriage, and saw her kerchief waving from the carriage window, as it rolled away.

I watched. O! how earnestly I watched, until the carriage rose to sight on the summit of a distant hill, beyond the spire of the village church. Then, as it disappeared and bore my mother from my sight, I sat down and wept bitterly.

Would I had never seen her face again!

A year passed away.

CHAPTER IV.

MAIDENHOOD.

It was June again. One summer evening I took the path which led from the garden to the summit of the hill which rose behind the cottage. As I pursued my way upward the sun was setting, and at every step I obtained a broader glimpse of the river, the dark Palisades, and the bay white with sails. When I reached the summit, the sun was on the verge of the horizon, and the sky in the west all purple and gold. Seating myself on the huge rock, which rose on the summit, surrounded by a circle of grand old trees, I surrendered myself to the quiet and serenity of the evening hour. The view was altogether beautiful. Beneath me sloped the broad hills, clad in wheat which already was changing from emerald to gold. Farther down, my cottage

home half hidden among trees. Then beneath the cottage, the homes of the village dotting the hills, among which wound the Neprehaun. The broad river and the wide bay heaving gently in the fading light, and the dark Palisades rising blackly against the gold and purple sky. A lovelier view cannot be imagined. And the air was full of summer—scented with breath of vines and blossoms and new-mown hay. As I surrendered myself to thoughts which arose unbidden, the first star came tremulously into view, and the twilight began to deepen into night. I was thinking of my life—of the past—of the future. A strange vision of the great world, struggled into dim shape before the eye of my mind.

"A year more, and I will enter the great world!" I ejaculated. A hand was laid lightly on my shoulder. I started to my feet with a shriek.

"What, Frank, don't you know me?" said a half laughing voice, and I beheld beside me a youth of some nineteen or twenty years, whose face, shaded by dark hair, was touched by the last flush of the declining day. It was Ernest, the only son of the good clergyman. I had not seen him for three years. In that time, he had grown from boyhood into young manhood. He sat beside me on the rock, and we talked together as freely as when we were but little children. Ernest was full of life and hope; his voice grew deep, his dark eyes large and lustrous, as he spoke of the prospects of his future.

"In one year, Frank, I will graduate and then,—then,—the great world lies before me!" His gaze was turned dreamily to the west, and his fine features drawn in distinct profile against the evening sky.

"And what part, Ernest, will you play in the great world?"

"Father wishes me to enter into the ministry, but,——" and he uttered a joyous, confident laugh,——"whatever part I play, I know that I will win!"

He uttered these words in the tone of youth and hope, that has never been darkened by a shadow, and then turning to me,—

"And you, Frank, what part will you play in the great world?" he said.

"I know not. My career is in the hands

of my only parent, who will come next year to take me hence. My childhood has been wrapped in mystery; and my future,—O, who can foretell the future?"

He gazed at me, for the first time, with an earnest and searching gaze. His eyes, large and gray, and capable of the most varied expression, became absent and dreamy.

"You are very beautiful!" he said, as though thinking aloud,—“O, very beautiful! You will marry rich,—yes,—wealth and position will be yours at once.”

And as the moon, rising over the brow of the hill, poured her light upon his thoughtful face, he took my hand and said:

“Frank, why is it that certain natures live only in the future or the past—never in the present? Look at ourselves, for instance. Yonder among the trees, bathed in the light of the rising moon, lies the cottage home in which we have passed the happiest, holiest hours of life. Of that home we are not thinking now—we are only looking forward to the future—and yet the time will come, when immersed in the conflict of the world, we will look back to that home, with the same yearning that one, stretched upon the couch of hopeless disease, looks forward to his grave!”

His voice was low and solemn—I never forgot his words. We sat for many minutes in silence. At length without a word, he took my hand, and we went down the hill together, by the light of the rising moon. We climbed the stile, passed under the garden boughs, and entered the cottage, and found the good old man seated in his library among his books. He raised his eyes as we came in, hand joined in hand, and a look of undisguised pleasure stole over his face.

“See here, father,” said Ernest laughingly, “when I went to college, I left my little sister in your care. I now return, and discover that my little sister has disappeared, and left in her place this wild girl, whom I found wandering to-night among the hills. Don’t you think there is something like a witch in her eyes?”

The old man smiled and laid his hand on my dark hair.

“Would to heaven!” he said, “that she might never leave this quiet home.” And the prayer came from his heart.

Ernest remained with us until fall. Those were happy days. We read, we talked, we walked, we lived with each other. More like sister and sister than brother and sister, we wandered arm-in-arm to the brow of the hill as the rich summer evening came on,—or crossed the river in early morning, and climbed the winding road that led to the brow of the Palisades,—or sat, at night, under the trees by the river’s bank, watching the stars as they looked down into the calm water. Sometimes at night, we sat in the library, and I read while the old man’s hand rested gently on my head and Ernest sat by my side. And often upon the porch, as the summer night wore on, Ernest and myself sang together some old familiar hymn, while “Father” listened in quiet delight. Thus three months passed away, and Ernest left for college.

“Next year, Frank, I graduate,” he cried, his thoughtful face flushed with hope, and his gray eyes full of joyous light—“and then for the battle with the world!”

He left, and the cottage seemed blank and desolate. The good clergyman felt his absence most keenly.

“Well, well,” he would mutter, “a year is soon round and then Ernest will be with us again!”

As for myself, I tried my books, my harp, took long walks alone, busied myself in household cares, but I could not reconcile myself to the absence of Ernest.

Winter came, and one night a letter arrived from Ernest to his father, and in that letter one for—Frank! How eagerly I took it from “father’s” hand and hurried to my room,—that room which I remember yet so vividly, with its window opening on the garden, and the picture of the Virgin Mary on the snow-white wall. Unmindful of the cold, I sat down alone and perused the letter, O, how eagerly! It was a letter from a brother to a sister, and yet beneath the calm current of a brother’s love, there flowed a deeper and a warmer love. How joyously he spoke of his future, and how strangely he seemed to mingle my name with every image of that future! I read his letter over and over, and slept with it upon my bosom; and I dreamed, O! such air-castle dreams, in which a whole lifetime seemed to pass away,

while Ernest and Frank, always young, always happy, went wandering, hand-in-hand, under skies without a cloud. But I awoke in fright and terror. It seemed to me that a cold hand—like the hand of a corpse—was laid upon my bosom, and somehow I thought that my mother was dead and that it was her hand. I started up in fright and tears, and lay shuddering until the rising sun shone gayly through the frosted window-pane.

Another year had nearly passed away.

It was June again, and it was toward evening that I stood upon the cottage porch watching—not the cloudless sky and glorious river bathed in the setting sun—but watching earnestly for the sound of a footstep. Ernest was expected home. He had graduated with all the honors—he was coming home! How I watched and waited for that welcome step! At last the wicket-gate was opened, and Ernest's step resounded on the garden-walk. Concealing myself among the vines which covered one of the pillars of the porch, I watched him as he approached, determining to burst upon him in a glad surprise as soon as he reached the steps. His head was downcast, he walked with slow and thoughtful steps; his long black hair fell wild and tangled on his shoulders. The joyous hue of youth on his cheek had been replaced by the pallor of long and painful thought. The hopeful boy of the last year had been changed into the moody and ambitious man! As he came on, although my heart swelled to bursting at sight of him, I felt awed and troubled, and forgot my original intention of bursting upon him in a merry surprise. He reached the porch—he ascended the step—and I glided silently from behind the pillar and confronted him. O, how his face lighted up as he saw me! His eyes, no longer glassy and abstracted, were radiant with a delight too deep for words!

"Frank!" he said, and silently pressed my hand.

"Ernest," was all I could reply, and we stood in silence—both trembling, agitated—and gazing into each other's eyes.

The good Clergyman was happy that evening, as he sat at the supper table, with Frank on one hand and Ernest on the other.

And old Alice peering at us through her spectacles could not help remarking, "Well, well, only yesterday children, and now such a handsome couple!"

CHAPTER V.

ON THE ROCK.

AFTER supper, Ernest and I went to the rock on the summit of the hill, where we had met the year before. The scene was the same,—the river, the bay, the dark Palisades, and the vast sky illumined by the rising moon,—but somehow we seemed changed. We sat apart from each other on the rock, and sat for a long time in silence. Ernest, with downcast eyes, picked in an absent way at some flowers which grew in the crevices of the rock. And I,—well I believe I tied the strings of my sun-bonnet into all sorts of knots. I felt half disposed to laugh and half disposed to cry.

At last I broke the silence :—

"You have fulfilled your words, Ernest," I said, "You have graduated with all the honors—as last year you said you would,—and now a bright career stretches before you. You will go forth into the great world, you will battle, you will win!"

"Frank," said he, stretching forth his hand,—“Do you see yonder river as it flows broad and rapid, in the light of the rising moon? You speak of a bright career before me—now I almost wish that I was quietly asleep beneath those waves.”

The sadness of his tone and look went to my heart.

"You surprise me, Frank. Now,"—and I attempted a laugh—"You have not fallen in love, since last year, have you?"

He looked up and surveyed me from head to foot. I was dressed in white—my hair fell in loose curls to my shoulders. In a year I had passed from the girl into the woman. I was taller, my form more roundly developed. And as he gazed upon me, I was conscious that he was remarking the change which had taken place in my appearance, and that his look was one of ardent admiration.

"Do you think that I have fallen in love since last year?" he said slowly and with a meaning look.

I turned away from his gaze, and exclaimed—

"But you are moody, Ernest. Last year you were so hopeful—now so melancholy. You *can*, you will succeed in life."

"That I can meet with what the world calls success, I do not doubt," he replied: "There is the career of the popular preacher, armed with a white handkerchief and a velvet Gospel,—of the lawyer, growing rich with the rent paid to him by crime, and devoting all the powers of his immortal soul to prove that black is white and white is black—of the merchant, who sees only these words painted upon the face of God's universe, 'Buy cheap and sell dear,'—careers such as these, Frank, are before me, and I am free to choose, and doubt not but that I could succeed in any of them. But to achieve such success I would not spend, I do not say the labor of years—No,—I would not spend the thought of a single hour."

"But the life of a good Minister of the Gospel, Ernest, living in some quiet country town, dividing his time between his parishioners and his books, and dwelling in a home like the cottage yonder—what say you to such a life, Ernest?"

He raised his eyes, and again surveyed me earnestly—"Ambitious as I am, I would sacrifice every thought of ambition for a life such as you picture—but upon one condition,"—he paused—

"And that condition?" I said in a low voice.

"Ask your own heart," was his reply, uttered in a tremulous voice.

I felt my bosom heave,—was agitated, trembling I knew not why,—but I made no answer.

There was a long and painful pause.

"The night is getting chill," I said at length, for want of something better to say: "Father is waiting for us. Let us go home."

I led the way down the path, and he followed moodily, without a word. As he helped me over the stile I saw that his face was pale, his lips tightly compressed. And when we came into the presence of his Father, he replied to the old man's kind questions, in a vacant and abstracted manner; I bade him "good night!" at last; he answered me, but added in a lower tone, inaudible

to the old man, "Young and rich and beautiful, you are beyond the reach of—a *country clergyman*."

The next morning while we were at breakfast, a letter came. It was from my mother. To-morrow she would come and take me from the cottage!

The letter dropped from the old man's hand, and Ernest rising abruptly from the table, rushed from the room.

And I was to leave the home of my happiest hours, and go forth into the great world! The thought fell like a thunderbolt upon every heart in the cottage.

CHAPTER VI.

AMONG THE PALISADES.

AFTER an hour Ernest met me on the porch; he was very pale.

"Frank," said he, kindly, "To-morrow you will leave us forever. Would you not like to see once more the place yonder,"—he pointed across the river to the Palisades—"where we spent so many happy hours last summer?"

He spoke of that dear nook, high up among the rocks, encircled by trees, and canopied by vines, where, we had indeed spent many a happy hour.

I made no reply, but put on my sun-bonnet and took his arm, and in a little while we were crossing the river, he rowing, while I sat in the stern. It was a beautiful day. We arrived at the opposite shore, at a point where the perpendicular wall of the Palisades, is for a mile or more, broken by a huge and sloping hill, covered with giant forest trees. Together we took the serpentine path, which, winding toward all points of the compass, led to the top of the Palisades. The birds were singing, the broad forest leaves and hanging vines quivered in the sun, the air was balmy, and the day the very embodiment of the freshness and fragrance of June. As we wound up the road (whose brown graveled surface contrasted with the foliage), we saw the sunlight streaming in upon the deep shadows of the wood, and heard from afar the lulling music of a waterfall. Departing from the beaten road, we wandered among the forest trees, and talked together as gladly and as familiarly as in other

days. There we wandered for hours, now in sunlight, now in shadow, now resting upon the brow of some moss-covered rock, and now stopping beside a spring of clear cold water, half hidden by thick green leaves. As noon drew near, we ascended to the top of the forest hill, and passing through a wilderness of tangled vines, came suddenly upon a rude farmhouse, one story high, built of logs, whose dark surface contrasted with the verdure of the garden and the foliage of the overshadowing tree. It was the same as in the year before. There was the well-pole rising above its roof and the well-bucket moist with clear cold water, and in the doorway stood the farmer's dame, who had often welcomed us to her quiet home.

"Bless me! how handsome my children have grown!" she cried, "and how's the good Domine? Come in, come in; the folks are all away in the fields; come in and rest you, and have some pie and milk, and"—she paused for breath—"and some dinner."

The good dame would take no denial, and we sat down to dinner with her—I can see the scene before me now—the carefully sanded floor, the old clock in the corner, the cupboard glistening with the burnished pewter, the neatly spread table, the broad hearth, covered with green boughs, and the open windows, with the sunbeams playing through the encircling vines. And then the good dame with her high cap, round, good-humored face, and spectacles resting on the bridge of her hooked nose. As we broke the home-made bread with her, we were as gay as larks.

"Well, I do like to see young folks enjoy themselves," said the dame.—"You don't know how often I've thought of you since you were here last summer. I have said, and I will say it, that a handsomer brother and sister I never yet did see."

"But you mistake," said Ernest, "We're not brother and sister."

"Only cousins," responded the dame, surveying us attentively, "Well, I'm glad of it, for there's no law ag'in cousins marryin', and you'd make such a handsome couple." And she laughed until her sides shook.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE FOREST NOOK.

LEAVING the farmhouse, we bent our way to the Palisades again. We had been gay and happy all the morning, now we became thoughtful. We entered a narrow path, and presently came upon the dear nook where we had spent so many happy hours. It was a quiet space of green-sward and velvet moss, encircled on all sides, save one, by the trunks of giant forest trees—the oak, the tulip poplar and the sycamore—which arose like rugged columns, their branches forming a roof far overhead. Half-way between the sward and the branches, hung a drapery of vines, swinging in the sunlight, and showering blossoms and fragrance on the summer air. Light shrubbery grew between the massive trunks of the trees, and in one part of the glade a huge rock arose, its summit projecting over the sward, and forming a sort of canopy or shelter for a rustic seat fashioned of oaken boughs. Looking upward through the drapery of vines and the roof of boughs, only one glimpse of blue sky was visible. Toward the east the glade was open, and over the tops of the forest trees (which rose from the glen beneath), you saw the river, the distant village and my cottage home shining in the sun. At the foot of the oak which formed one of the portals of the glade, was a clear cold spring, resting in a basin of rock, and framed in leaves and flowers. Altogether the dear nook of the forest was worthy of June.

For a moment we surveyed this quiet scene—thought of the many happy hours we had spent there in the previous summer—and then turning our faces to the east, we stood, hand link'd in hand, gazing over forest trees and river upon our far-off cottage home.

"Does it not look beautiful, as it shines there in the sun?"—I said.

Ernest at first did not reply, but turned his gaze full upon me. His face was flushed and there was a strange fire in his eyes.

"To-morrow you leave that home forever," he exclaimed, and I trembled, I knew not why at the sound of his voice—"I will never see you again—I—" he dropped my

hand and turned his face away. I saw his head fall on his breast, and saw that breast heave with agitation; urged by an impulse I could not control, I glided to his side, put my hand upon his arm, and looked up into his face.

"Ernest," I whispered.

He turned to me, for a moment regarded me with a look of intense passion and then caught me to his heart. His arms were around me, my bosom heaved against his breast, his kiss was on my lips—the first kiss since childhood, and O, how different from the kiss which a brother presses on a sister's lips!

"Frank I love you! Many beautiful women have I seen, but there is that in your gaze, your voice, your very presence, which is Heaven itself to me. I cannot live without you! and cannot, cannot think of losing you without madness. Frank, be mine, be my wife! Be mine, and the home which shines yonder in the sunlight shall be ours! Frank, for God's sake say you love me!"

He sank at my feet and clasped my knees with his trembling hands. O the joy, the rapture of that moment! As I saw his face upraised to mine, I felt that I loved him with all my soul, that I could die for him. Reaching forth my hands I drew him gently to his feet, and fell upon his breast and called him, "Husband!" Would I had died there, on his bosom, even as his lips met mine, and the words "my wife!" trembled on my ear! Would I had at that moment fallen dead upon his breast!

Even as he gathered me to his bosom the air all at once grew dark; looking overhead, we saw a vast cloud rolling up the heavens, dark as midnight, yet fringed with sunlight. On and on it rolled, the air grew darker, darker, an ominous thunder-peal broke over our heads, and rolled away among the gorges of the hills. Then the clouds grew dark as night. We could not see each other's faces. For a moment our distant home shone in sunlight, and then the eastern sky was wrapt in clouds, the river hidden by driving rain. Trembling with fright I clung to Ernest's neck—he bore me to the beech in the shadow of the rock—another thunder-peal and a flash of lightning that blinded me. I buried my face in his bosom, to hide my

eyes from that awful glare. The tempest which had arisen so suddenly—even as we exchanged our first vows—was now upon us and in power. The trees rocked to the blast. The distant river was now dark and now one mass of sheeted flame. Peal on peal the thunder burst over our heads, and as one peal died away in distant echoes, another more awful seemed hurled upon us, from the very zenith. And amid the darkness and glare of that awful storm, I clung to Ernest's neck, my bosom beating against his heart, and we repeated our vows, and talked of our marriage, and laid plans for our future.

"Frank, my heart is filled with an awful foreboding," he said, and his voice was so changed and husky, that I raised my head from his bosom, and even in the darkness sought to gaze upon his face. A lightning flash came and was gone, but by that momentary glare, I saw his countenance agitated in every lineament.

"What mean you Ernest?"

"You will leave our home to-morrow and never return, never! The sunshine which was upon us, as we exchanged our vows, was in a moment succeeded by the blackness of the awful tempest. A bad omen, Frank, a dark prophecy of our future. There is only one way to turn the omen of evil, into a prophecy of good."

He drew me close in his arms, and bent his lips to my ear—"Be mine, and now! be mine! Let the thunder-peal be our marriage music, this forest glade our marriage couch!"

I was faint, trembling, but I sprang from his arms, and stood erect in the center of the glade. My dark hair fell to my shoulders; a flash of lightning lit up my form, clad in snow-white. As wildly, as completely as I loved him, I felt my eyes flash with indignation.

"Words like these to a girl who has been reared under your father's roof!"

He fell at my feet, besought my forgiveness in frantic tones, and bathed my hands with his tears.

I fainted in his arms.

When I unclosed my eyes again, I found myself pure and virgin in the arms of my plighted husband. The clouds were parting, the tempest was over, and the sun shone out

once more. Every leaf glittered with diamond drops. The last blast of the storm was passing over the distant river, and through the driving clouds, I saw the sunlight shining once more upon our cottage home.

"Forgive me, Frank, forgive me," he cried, bending passionately over me. "See! Your bad omen has been turned into good!" I cried joyfully—"First the sunshine, then the storm, but now the sun shines clear again;" and I pointed to the diamond drops glittering in the sun.

"And you will be true to me, Frank?"

"Before heaven I promise it, in life, in death, forever!"

CHAPTER VIII.

HOME, ADIEU!

It was toward the close of the afternoon that we took our way from the glade through the forest to the river shore. We crossed the river, and passed through the village. Together we ascended the road that led to our home, and at the wicket-gate, found a splendid carriage with liveried servants.

The good clergyman stood at the gate, his bared forehead and white hairs bathed in the sunshine; beside him, darkly dressed, diamonds upon her rich attire, my mother. Old Alice stood weeping in the background.

"Come, Frank, your things are packed and we must be away," she said, abruptly, as though we had seen each other only the day before; "I wish to reach our home in New York, before night. Go in the house dear," she kissed me, "and get your bonnet and shawl. Quick my love!"

Not daring to trust myself to speak—for my heart was full to bursting—I hurried through the gate, and along the garden walk.

"How beautiful she has grown!" I heard my mother exclaim. One look into the old familiar library room, one moment in prayer by the bed, in which I had slept since childhood!

Placing the bonnet on my curls, and dropping my shawl around me, I hurried from my cottage home. There were a few moments of agony, of blessings, of partings and

tears. Old Alice pressed me in her arms, and bid me good-by. The good old clergyman laid his hands upon my head, and lifting his beaming eyes to heaven, invoked the blessing of God upon my head.

"I give your child to you again!" he said, placing me in my mother's arms—"May she be a blessing to you, as for years past she has been the blessing and peace of my home!"

I looked around for Ernest; he had disappeared.

I entered the carriage, and sank sobbing on the seat.

"But I am not taking the dear child away from you forever," said my mother, bending from the carriage window. "She will come and see you often, my dear Mr. Walworth, and you will come and see her. You have the number of our town residence on that card. And bring your son, and good Alice with you, and, ——"

The carriage rolled away.

So strange and unexpected had been the circumstances of this departure from my home, that I could scarce believe myself awake.

I did not raise my head, until we had descended the hill, passed the village and gained a mile or more on our way.

We were ascending a long slope, which led to the summit of a hill, from which, I knew, I might take a last view of my childhood's home.

As we reached the summit of the hill, my mother was looking out of one window toward the river, and I looked out of the other, and saw, beyond the church spire and over the hills, the white walls of my home.

"Frank!" whispered a low voice.

Ernest was by the carriage. There was a look exchanged, a word, and he was gone. Gone into the trees by the roadside.

He left a flower in my hand. I placed it silently in my bosom.

"Frank! How beautiful you have grown!" said my mother, turning from the window, and fixing upon me an ardent and admiring gaze. And the next moment she was wrapt in thought and the wrinkle grew deeper between her brows.

CHAPTER IX.

ERNEST AND HIS SINGULAR ADVENTURE.

BEFORE I resume my own history, I must relate an instance in the life of Ernest, which had an important bearing on his fate. (This incident I derive from MSS. written by Ernest himself.) Soon after my departure from the cottage home, he came to New York with his father, and they directed their steps to my mother's residence; as indicated on the card which she had left with the clergyman; but to their great disappointment, they discovered that my mother and myself had just left town for Niagara Falls. Six months afterward, Ernest received a long letter from me, concluding with these words: "*To-morrow, myself and mother take passage for Europe, in the steamer. We will be absent for a year or more.*"

Determined to see me at all hazards, he hurried to town, but, too late! The steamer had sailed; her flag fluttered in the air, far down the bay, as standing on the battery, Ernest followed her course, with an almost maddened gaze. Sorrowfully he returned to the country and informed his father of my sudden departure for Europe.

"Can she have forgotten us?" said the old man.

"O, father, this letter," replied Ernest, showing the long letter which I had written, "this will show you that she has not forgotten us, but that her heart beats warmly as ever—that she is the same."

And he read the letter to the good old man, who frequently interrupted him, with "God bless her! God bless my child!"

Soon afterward Ernest came to New York and entered his name in the office of an eminent lawyer. Determining to make the law his profession, he hoped to complete his studies before my return from Paris. He lived in New York, and began to move in the circles of its varied society. Among the acquaintances which he made were certain authors and artists who, once a month, in company with a few select friends, gave a social supper at a prominent hotel.

At one of these suppers Ernest was a guest. The wine passed round, wit sparkled, and the enjoyment of the festival did not begin to flag even when midnight drew near.

While one of the guests was singing, a portly gentleman (once well known as a man of fashion, the very Brummel of the side-walk) began to converse with Ernest in a low voice.

He described a lady—a young widow with a large fortune—who at that time occupied a large portion of the interest of certain circles in New York. She was exceedingly beautiful. She was witty, accomplished, eloquent. She rivaled in fascination Ninon and Aspasia. Nightly, to a select circle, she presided over festivals whose voluptuousness was masked in flowers. Her previous history was unknown, but she had suddenly entered the orbit of New York social life—of a peculiar kind of social life—as a star of the first magnitude. His blood heated by wine, his imagination warmed by the description of his fashionable friend, Ernest manifested great curiosity to behold this singular lady.

"You shall see her to-night—at once," whispered the fashionable gentleman. "She gives a select party to-night. Let us glide off from the company unobserved."

They passed from the company, took their hats and cloaks—it was a clear, cold winter night—and entered a carriage.

"I will introduce you by the name of Johnson—Fred. Johnson, a rich southern planter," said the fashionable gentleman. "You need not call me by my real name. Call me Lawson."

"But why this concealment?" asked Ernest, as the carriage rolled on.

"O, well, never mind," added Lawson (as he desired to be called), and then continued: "We'll soon be near her mansion, or *palace* is the more appropriate word. We will find some of the first gentlemen and finest ladies of New York under her roof. I tell you, she'll set you half wild, this 'Midnight Queen!'"

"Midnight Queen!" echoed Ernest.

"That's what we call her. A 'Midnight Queen' indeed, as mysterious and voluptuous as the midnight moon shining in an Italian sky."

They arrived in front of a lofty mansion, situated in one of the most aristocratic parts of New York. Its exterior was dark and silent as the winter midnight itself.

"A light hid under a bushel—outside dark enough, but inside bright as a new dollar," whispered Lawson, ascending the marble steps and ringing the bell.

The door was opened for the space of six inches or more,—

"Who's there?" said a voice from within.

Lawson bent his face near to the aperture and whispered a few words inaudible to Ernest. The door was opened wide, and carefully closed and bolted behind them, as soon as they crossed the threshold. They stood in a vast hall lighted by a hanging lamp.

"Leave hats and cloaks here—and come."

Lawson took Ernest by the hand and pushed open a door.

They entered a range of parlors, brilliantly lighted by two chandeliers, as brilliantly furnished with chairs and sofas and mirrors, and adorned with glowing pictures and statues of white marble. A piano stood in a recess, and in the last parlor of the three a supper-table was spread. These parlors were crowded by some thirty guests, men and women, some of whom, seated on chairs and sofas, were occupied in low whispered conversation, while others took wine at the supper-table, and others again were grouped round the piano, listening to the voice of an exceedingly beautiful woman.

Ernest uttered an ejaculation. Never had he seen a spectacle like this, never seen before, grouped under one roof, so many beautiful women. Beautiful women, richly dressed, their arms and shoulders bare, or veiled only by mist-like lace, which gave new fascination to their charms. It did not by any means decrease the surprise of Ernest when he discovered that some of the ladies—those whose necks and shoulders glowed most white and beautiful in the light—wore masks.

"What is this place?" he whispered to Lawson, as apparently unheeded by the guests, they passed through the parlors.

"Hush! not so loud," whispered his companion. "Take a glass of wine, my boy, and your eyesight will be clearer. This place is a quiet little retreat in which certain gentlemen and ladies of New York, by no means lacking in wealth or position, endeavor to carry the Koran into practice, and

create, even in our cold climate, a paradise worthy of Mahomet. In a word, it is the residence of a widowed lady, who, blest with fortune and all the good things which fortune brings, delights in surrounding herself with beautiful women and intellectual men. How do you like that wing? There are at least a hundred gentlemen in New York, who would give a cool five hundred to stand where you stand now, or even cross the threshold of this mansion. I'm an old stager, and have brought you here in order to enjoy the effect which a scene like this produces on one so inexperienced as you. But you must remember one law which governs this place and all who enter it—"

"That condition?"

"All that is said or done here remains a secret forever within the compass of these walls; and you must never recognize, in any other place, any person whom you have first encountered here. This is a matter of honor, Walworth."

"And where is the 'Midnight Queen?'"

"She is not with her guests, I see—but I will give you an answer in a moment," and Lawson left the room.

Drinking glass after glass of champagne, Ernest stood by the supper-table, a silent spectator of that scene, whose voluptuous enchantment gradually inflamed his imagination and fired his blood. He seemed to have been suddenly transported from dull matter-of-fact, every-day life, to a scene in some far oriental city, in the days of Haroun Alraschid. And he surrendered himself to the enchantment of the place, like one for the first time enjoying the intoxication of opium.

Lawson returned, and came quietly to his side—

"Would you like to see the 'Midnight Queen,'—alone—in her parlor?" he whispered.

"Of all things in the world. You have roused my curiosity. I am like a man in a delicious dream."

"Understand me—she is chary of her smiles to an old stager like me—but I think, that there is something in you that will interest her. She awaits you in her apartments. You are a young English lord on

your travels (better than a planter), Lord Stanley Fitz Herbert. With that black dress and somber face of yours you will take her wonderfully."

"But can I indeed see her?"

"Leave the room—ascend the stairs—at the head of the stairs a light shines from a door which is slightly open; take a bold heart and enter."

"Inflamed by curiosity, by the wine which he had drunk, and the scene around him, Ernest did not take time for a second thought, but left the room, ascended the stairs, and stood before the door from whose aperture a belt of light streamed out upon the dark passage. There, for a moment, he hesitated, but that was all. He opened the door and entered. He stood spell-bound by the scene. If the parlors below were magnificently furnished, this apartment was worthy of an empress. There were lofty walls hung with silk hangings and adorned with pictures; a couch with a silken canopy; mirrors that glittered gently in the rich voluptuous light; in a word, every detail of luxury and extravagance.

In the center of all stood the "Midnight Queen"—in one hand she held an open letter. Her back was toward Ernest as he lingered near the threshold. Her neck and shoulders were bare, and he could remark at a glance their snowy whiteness and voluptuous outline, although her dark hair was gathered in glossy masses upon the shoulders, half hiding them from view. A dark dress, rich in its very simplicity, left her arms bare and did justice to the rounded proportions of her form.

She turned and confronted Ernest, even as he, the blood bounding in his veins, advanced a single step.

At once they spoke:

"My Lord Stanley, I believe,—"

"The 'Midnight Queen,'—"

The words died on their lips. They stood as if suddenly frozen to the floor. The beautiful face of the "Midnight Queen" was pale as death, and as for Ernest, the glow of the wine had left his cheek—his face was livid and distorted.

Moments passed and neither had power to speak.

"O, my God, it is Frank!" the words at

last burst from the lips of Ernest, and he fell like a dead man at her feet.

Yes, the "Midnight Queen" was Frances Van Huyden, his betrothed wife—six months ago resting on his bosom and whispering "husband" in his ear,—and now—the wife of another? A widow? Or one utterly fallen from all virtue and all hope?

CHAPTER X.

THE PALACE-HOME.

HAVING thus given the incident from the life of Ernest, as far as possible, in the very words of his MSS., let me continue my history from the hour when, in company with my mother, I left the cottage home of the good clergyman. After the incident just related, nothing in my life can appear strange.

I was riding in the carriage with my mother toward New York.

"You are, indeed, very beautiful, Frank," said she, once more regarding me attentively. "Your form is that of a mature woman, and your carriage (I remarked it as you passed up the garden-walk) excellent. But this country dress will not do. We will do better than all that when we get to town."

It was night when the carriage left the avenue and rolled into Broadway. The noise, the glare, the people hurrying by, all frightened me. At the same time Broadway brought back a dim memory of my early childhood in Paris. Turning from Broadway, the carriage at length stopped before a lofty mansion, the windows of which were closed from the sidewalk to the roof.

"This is your home," said my mother, as she led me from the carriage up the marble steps into the hall where, in the light of a globular lamp, a group of servants in livery awaited us.

"Jenkins,"—my mother spoke to an elderly servant in dark livery turned up with red—"let dinner be served in half an hour."

Then turning to another servant, not quite so old, but wearing the same livery, she said:

"Jones, Miss Van Huyden wishes to take a look at her house before we go to dinner. Take the light and go before us."

The servant, holding a wax candle placed in a huge silver candlestick, went before us

and showed us the house from the first to the fourth floor. Never before had I beheld such magnificence even in my dreams. I could not restrain ejaculations of pleasure and surprise at every step,—my mother keenly regarding me, sometimes with a faint smile and sometimes with the wrinkle growing deeper between her brows. A range of parlors on the lower floor were furnished with everything that the most extravagant fancy could desire, or exhaustless wealth procure. Carpets that gave no echo to the step; sofas and chairs cushioned with velvet and (so it seemed to me) framed in gold; mirrors extending from the ceiling to the floor; pictures, statues, and tables with tops either of marble or ebony; the walls lofty, and the ceiling glowing with a painting which represented Aurora and the Hours winging their way through a summer sky.

"Whose picture, mother?" I asked, pointing to a picture of a singularly handsome man, with dark hair and beard, and eyes remarkable at once for their brightness and expression.

"Your father, dear," answered my mother, and again the mark between her brows became ominously perceptible. "There is your piano, Frank,—you'll find it something better than the one which you had at the good parson's."

The servant led the way, up the wide stairway, thickly carpeted, to the upper rooms. Here the magnificence of the first floor was repeated on a grander, a more luxurious scale. We passed through room after room, my eyes dazzled by new signs of wealth and luxury at every step. At last we paused on the thick carpet of a spacious bed-chamber, whose appointments combined the richest elegance with the nicest taste. It was hung with curtains of light azure. An exquisite and touching picture of the Virgin Mary confronted the toilette table and mirror. A bed with coverlet white as snow, satin covered pillows and canopy of lace, stood in one corner; and wherever I turned there were signs of neatness, taste and elegance. I could not too much admire the apartment.

"It is your bedroom, my dear," said my mother, silently enjoying my delight.

"Why," said I laughingly,—"*it is grand enough for a queen.*"

"And are you not a queen," answered my mother, "and a very beautiful one." Turning to the servant, who stood staring at me with eyes big as saucers, she said—

"Tell Mrs. Jenkins, the housekeeper, to come here :"—Jones left the chamber, and presently returned with Mrs. Jenkins, a portly lady, with a round, good-humored face.

"Frank, this is *your* housekeeper,"—Mrs. Jenkins simpered and courtesied, shaking at the same time the bundle of keys at her waist. "Mrs. Jenkins, this is your young mistress, Miss Van Huyden. Give me the keys."

She took the keys from the housekeeper, and placed them in my hands :

"My dear, this house and all that it contains are yours, I surrender it to your charge."

Scarcely knowing what to do with myself I took the keys—which were heavy enough—and handing them back to Mrs. Jenkins, "hoped that she would continue to superintend the affairs of my mansion, as heretofore." All of which pleased my mother and made her smile.

"We will go to dinner without dressing," and my mother led the way down stairs to the dining-room. It was a large apartment, in the center of which stood a luxuriously furnished table, glittering with gold plate. Servants in livery stood like statues behind my chair and my mother's. How different from the plain fare and simple style of the good clergyman's home! Nay how widely contrasted with the rude dinner in a log cabin to which Ernest and myself sat down a few hours ago!

In vain I tried to partake of the rich dishes set out before me; I was too much excited to eat. Dinner over, coffee was served, and the servants retired. Mother and I were left alone.

"Frank, do you blame me," she said, looking at me carefully—"for having you reared so quietly, far away in the country, in order that at the proper age, strong in health and rich in accomplishments and beauty, you might be prepared to enter upon the enjoyments and duties suitable to your station?"

How could I blame her?

I spoke gratefully again and again of the wealth and comfort which surrounded me, and then forgetting it all—broke forth into im-

passioned praise of my cottage home, of the good clergyman, of old Alice and—Ernest.

Something which came over my mother's face at the mention of Ernest's name, warned me that it was not yet time to speak of my engagement to him.

That night I bathed my limbs in a perfumed bath, laid my head on a silken pillow, and slept beneath a canopy of lace, as soft and light and transparent as the summer mist through which you can see the blue sky and the distant mountain. And resting on the silken pillow I dreamed—not of the splendor with which I was surrounded, nor of the golden prospects of my future,—but, of my childhood's home, and the quiet scenes of other days. In my sleep my heart turned back to them. Once more I heard the voice of the good old man. I heard the shrill tones of Alice, as the sun shone on my frosted window-pane, on a clear, cold winter morn. Then the voice of Ernest, calling me "Wife!" and pressing me to his bosom in the forest nook. I awoke with his name on my lips, and,—

My mother stood by the bedside gazing upon me attentively, a smile on her lips, but the wrinkle darkly defined between her brows. The sun shone brightly through the window curtains.

"Get up my dear," she kissed me,—*"You have a busy day before you."*

And it was a busy day! I was handed over to the milliners and dressmakers, and whirled in my carriage from one jeweler's shop to another. It was not until the third day that my dresses were completed—according to my mother's taste,—and not until the fourth, that the jewels which were to adorn my forehead, my neck, my arms and bosom, had been properly selected. Wardrobe and diamonds worthy of a queen—and was I happy? No! I began to grow homesick, for my dear quiet home, on the hill-side above the Neprehaun.

CHAPTER XI.

"SHE'LL DO."

It was on the fourth day, in the afternoon, that my mother desired my presence in the parlor, where she wished to present me to a

much esteemed friend, Mr. Wareham—Mr. Wallace Wareham.

"An excellent man," whispered my mother as we went down stairs together, "and immensely rich."

I was richly dressed in black; my neck, my arms and shoulders bare. My dark hair, gathered plainly aside from my face, was adorned by a single snow-white flower. As I passed by the mirror in the parlor, I could not help feeling a throb of womanly pride, or—vanity; and my mother whispered, "Frank, you excel yourself to-day."

Mr. Wareham sat on the sofa, in the front parlor, in the mild light of the curtained window. He was an elderly gentleman, somewhat bald, and slightly inclined to corpulence. He was sleekly clad in black, and there was a gold chain across his satin vest, and a brilliant diamond upon his ruffled bosom. He sat in an easy, composed attitude, resting both hands on his gold-headed cane. At first sight he impressed me, as an elderly gentleman, exceedingly *nice* in his personal appearance; and that was all. But there was something peculiar and remarkable about his face and look, which did not appear at first sight.

I was presented to him: he rose and bowed; and took me kindly by the hand.

Then conversing in a calm, even tone, which soon set me at ease, he led me to talk of my childhood—of my home on the Neprehaun—of the life which I had passed with the good clergyman. I soon forgot myself in my subject, and grew impassioned, perchance eloquent. I felt my cheeks glow and my eyes sparkle. But all at once I was brought to a dead pause, by remarking the singular expression of Mr. Wareham's face.

I stopped abruptly—flushed—and at a glance surveyed him closely.

His forehead was high and bold, and encircled by slight curls of black hair, streaked with gray,—its expression eminently intellectual. But the lower part of his face was heavy, almost animal. There was a deep wrinkle on either side of his mouth, and as for the mouth itself, its upper lip was thin, almost imperceptible, while the lower one was large, projecting and of deep red, approaching purple, thus presenting a singular contrast to the corpse-like pallor of his

cheeks. His eyes, half hidden under the bulging lids, when I began my description of my childhood's home, all at once expanded, and I saw their real expression and color. They were large, the eyeballs exceedingly white, and the pupils clear gray, and their expression reminded you of nothing that you had ever seen or heard of, but simply made you *afraid*. And as the eyes expanded, a slight smile would agitate his upper lip, while the lower one protruded, disclosing a set of artificial teeth, white as milk. It was the sudden expansion of the eyes, the smile on the upper lip and the protrusion of the lower one, that made up the peculiar expression of Mr. Wareham's face,—an expression which made you feel as though you had just awoke from a grotesque yet frightful dream.

"Why do you pause, daughter?" said my mother, observing my confusion.

"Proceed my child," said Mr. Wareham, devouring me from head to foot with his great eyes, at the same time rubbing his lower lip against the upper, as though he was tasting something good to eat. "I enjoy these delightful reminiscences of childhood. I dote on such things."

But I could not proceed—I blushed again—and the tears came into my eyes.

"You have been fatigued by the bustle of the last three days," said my mother kindly: "Mr. Wareham will excuse you," and she made me a sign to leave the room.

Never was a sign more willingly obeyed. I hurried from the room, and as I closed the door, I heard Mr. Wareham say in a low voice—

"She'll do. When will you tell her?"

That night, as I sat on the edge of my bed, clad in my night-dress—my dark hair half gathered in a lace cap and half falling on my shoulders—my mother came suddenly into the room, and placing her candle on a table, took her seat by me on the bed. She was, as I have told you, an exceedingly beautiful woman, in spite of the threads of silver in her hair and the ominous wrinkle between her brows. But as she sat by me, and put her arm about my neck, toying with my hair, her look was infinitely affectionate.

"And what do you think of Mr. Wareham, dear?" she asked me—and I felt that her gaze was fixed keenly on my face.

I described my impressions frankly and with what language I could command, concluding with the words, "In short, I do not like him. He makes me feel afraid."

"O, you'll soon get over that," answered my mother. "Now he takes a great interest in you. Let me tell you something about him. He is a foreign gentleman, immensely rich; worth hundreds of thousands, perhaps a million. He has estates in this country, in England and France. He has traveled over half the globe; on further acquaintance you will be charmed by his powers of observation, his fund of anecdote, his easy flow of conversational eloquence. And then he has a good heart, Frank! I could keep you up all night in repeating but a small portion of his innumerable acts of benevolence. I met him first in Paris, years ago, just after he had unhappily married. And since I first met him he has been my fast friend. He is a good, a noble man, Frank; you *will*, you *must* like him."

"But, then, his eyes, mother! and *that* lip!" and I cast my eyes meekly to the floor.

"Pshaw!" returned my mother, with a start, "don't allow yourself to make fun of a dear personal friend of mine." She kissed me on the forehead,—"*you will* like him, dear," and bade me good-night.

And on my silken pillow I slept and dreamed—of home,—of the good old man,—of Ernest and the forest nook,—but all my dreams were haunted by a vision of two great eyes and a huge red lip—everywhere, everywhere they haunted me, the lip now projecting over the clergyman's head and the eyes looking over Ernest's shoulder. I awoke with a start and a laugh.

"You are in good spirits, my child," said my mother, who stood by the bed.

"I had a frightful dream but it ended funnily. All night long I've seen nothing but Mr. Wareham's eyes and lip, but the last I saw of them they were flying like butterflies a few feet above ground, eyes first and lips next, and old Alice chasing them with her broom."

"Never mind; you *will* like him," rejoined my mother.

I certainly had every chance to like him. For three days he was a constant visitor at

our house. He accompanied mother and myself on a drive along Broadway and out on the avenue. I enjoyed the excitement of Broadway and the fresh air of the country, but—Mr. Wareham was by my side, talking pleasantly, even eloquently, and looking all the while as if he would like to eat me. We went to the opera, and for the first time, the fairy world of the stage was disclosed to me. I was enchanted,—the lights, the costumes, the music, the circle of youth and beauty, all wrapt me in a delicious dream, but—close by my side was Mr. Wareham, his eyes expanded and his lip protruding. I thought of the Arabian Nights and was reminded of a well-dressed Ghoul. I began to hate the man. On the fourth day he brought me a handsome bracelet, glittering with diamonds, which my mother bade me accept, and on the fifth day I hated him with all my soul. There was an influence about him which repelled me and made me afraid.

It was the sixth night in my new home, and in my night-dress, I was seated on the edge of my bed, the candle near, and my mother by my side. She had entered the room with a serious and even troubled face. The wrinkle was marked deep between her brows. Fixing my lace cap on my head and smoothing my curls with a gentle pressure of her hand, she looked at me long and anxiously but in silence.

"O, mother!" I said, "when will we visit 'father,'—and good old Alice, and—Ernest? I am so anxious to see my home again!"

"You must forget that home," said my mother gravely. "You will shortly be surrounded by new ties and new duties. Nay, do not start and look at me with so much wonder. I see that I must be plain with you. Listen to me, Frank. Who owns this house?"

"It is yours!"

"The pictures, the gold plate, the furniture worthy of such a palace?"

"Yours,—all yours, mother."

"Who purchased the dresses and the diamonds which you wear,—dresses and diamonds worthy of a queen?"

"You did, mother—of course," I hesitated.

"Wrong, Frank, all wrong!" and her eyes shone vividly, and the mark between her

brows grew blacker. "The house which shelters you, the furniture which meets your gaze, the dresses which clothe you, and the diamonds which adorn your person, are the property of—Mr. Wareham."

It seemed to me as if the floor had opened at my feet.

"O, mother! you are jesting," I faltered.

CHAPTER XII.

A REVELATION.

"I AM a beggar, child, and you are a beggar's daughter. It is to Mr. Wareham that we are indebted for all that we enjoy. For years he has paid the expenses of your education; and now that you have grown to young womanhood he shelters you in a palace, surrounds you with splendor that a queen might envy, and not satisfied with this,—"

She paused and fixed her eyes upon my face, I know that I was frightfully pale.

"Offers you his hand in marriage."

For a moment the light, the mirrors, the roof itself swam round me, and I sank half-fainting in my mother's arms.

"O! this is but a jest, a cruel jest to frighten me. Say, mother, it is a jest!"

"It is not a jest; it is sober, serious earnest;" and she raised me sternly from her arms. "He has offered his hand, and you will marry him."

I flung myself on my knees at the bedside, clasped her hands, and as my night-dress fell back from my shoulders and bosom, I told her, with sobs and tears, of my love for Ernest, and my engagement with him.

"Pshaw! A poor clergyman's son," she said bitterly.

"O, let us leave this place, mother!" I cried, still pressing her hands to my bosom.

"You say that we are poor. Be it so. We will find a home together in the home of my childhood. Or if that fails us, I will work for you. I will toil from sun to sun and all night long,—beg,—do anything rather than marry this man. For, mother, I cannot help it,—but I do hate him with all my soul."

"Pretty talk, very pretty!" and she loosened her hands from my grasp; "but did you ever try poverty, my child? Did you ever know what the word meant,—"

POVERTY? Did you ever work sixteen hours a day, at your needle, for as many pennies, walk the streets at dead of winter in half-naked feet, and go for two long days and nights without a morsel of food? Did you ever try it, my child? That's the life which *poor* widows and their pretty daughters live in New York, my dear."

"But Ernest loves me,—he will make his way in life,—we will be married,—you will share our home, dear mother."

These words rendered her perfectly furious. She started up and uttered a frightful oath—it was the first time I had ever heard an oath from a woman's lips. Her countenance for a moment was fiendish. She assailed me with a torrent of reproaches, concluding thus:

"And this is your gratitude for the care, the anxiety, the very agony of a mother's anxiety, which I have endured on your account for years! In return for all you condemn me to—poverty! But it shall not be. One of us must bend, and that one will not be me. I swear, girl,"—her brows were knit, she was lividly pale, and she raised her right hand to heaven,—"that you *shall* marry this man."

"And I swear,"—I bounded to my feet, my bosom bare, and the blood boiling in my veins—perchance it was the same blood which gave my mother her fiery temper,—*"I swear that I will not marry him as long as there is life in me. Do you hear me, mother? Before I marry that miserable wretch, whose very presence fills me with loathing, I will fall a corpse at your feet."*

My words, my attitude took her by surprise. She surveyed me silently but was too much enraged to speak.

"O, that my father was living!" I cried, the fit of passion succeeded by a burst of tears; "he would save me from this hideous marriage."

My mother quietly drew a letter from her bosom and placed it open in my hand.

"Your father is living. That letter is the last one I have received from him. Read it, my angel."

I took it,—it was very brief,—I read it at a glance. It was addressed to my mother and bore a recent date. These were its contents:

"DEAR FRANK:

"My sentence expires in two weeks from to-day. Send me some decent clothes, and let me know where I will meet you. Glad to hear that your plans as regards our *daughter* approach a 'glorious' completion.

"Yours as ever,

"CHARLES."

It was a letter from a convict in Auburn prison,—and that convict was my father!

"It is false; my father died years ago," I cried in very agony. "This is not from my father."

"It is from your father," answered my mother; "and unless I send him the clothes which he asks for, you will see him, in less than three weeks, in his convict rags."

"O, mother! are you human? A mother to taunt her own daughter with her father's shame,—"

My temples throbbed madly and my sight failed. All that mortal can endure and be conscious, I had endured. I sank on the floor, and had not my mother caught me in her arms, I would have wounded my forehead against the marble table.

All night long, half waking, half delirious, I tossed on my silken couch mingling the name of my convict father and of Ernest in my broken exclamations. Once I was conscious for a moment and looked around with clear eyes. My mother was watching over me. Her face was bathed in tears. She was *human* after all. That moment past, the delirium returned and I struggled with horrible dreams until morning.

CHAPTER XIII.

MORPHINE.

WHEN I awoke next morning, my mind was clear again, and even as I unclosed my eyes and saw the sunlight shining gayly through the curtains, a fixed purpose took possession of my soul. It was yet early morning. There was no one save myself in the chamber. Perchance worn out by watching, my mother had retired to rest. I quietly arose and dressed myself—not in the splendid attire furnished by my mother, but in the plain white dress, bonnet, and shawl which I had brought with me from my cottage home.

"It is early. No one is stirring in the mansion. I can pass from the hall door unobserved. Then it is only sixteen miles to home,—only sixteen miles; I can walk it."

And at the very thought of meeting "father" and Ernest again, my heart leaped in my bosom. Determined to escape from the mansion at all hazards, I drew my veil over my face, my shawl across my shoulders, and hurried to the door. I opened it, my foot was on the threshold, when I found myself confronted by the portly form of Mrs. Jenkins.

"Pardon me, Miss," she said, placing herself directly before me; "your mother gave me directions to call her as soon as you awoke."

"But I wish to take a short walk and breathe a little of the morning air," I answered, and attempted to pass her.

"The morning air is not good for young ladies," said another voice, and my mother's face appeared over the housekeeper's shoulder. "After a while we shall take a ride, my dear. For the present, you will please retire to your room."

Startled at the sound of my mother's voice, I involuntarily stepped back—the door was closed, and I heard the key turn in the lock.

I was a prisoner in my own room. There I remained all day long; my meals were served by the housekeeper and my maid Caroline. My mother did not appear. How I passed that day, a prisoner in my luxurious chamber, cannot be described. I sat for hours, with my head resting on my hands, and my eyes to the floor. What plans of escape, mingled with forebodings of the future, crossed my brain! At length I took pen and paper, and wrote a brief note to Ernest, informing him of my danger, and begging him, as he loved me, to hasten at once to town and to the mansion. This note I folded, sealed, and directed properly. "Caroline," said I to my maid, who was a pleasant-faced young woman of about twenty, with dark hair and eyes—"I would like this letter to be placed in the post-office at once. Will you take charge of it for me?"

"I'll give it to Jones," she responded—"He's goin' down to the post office right away."

"But Caroline," I regarded her with a meaning look, "I do not wish any one to know, that I sent this letter to the post-office. Will you keep it a secret?"

"Not a livin' mortal shall know it—not a livin' mortal;" and taking the letter she left the room. After a few minutes she returned with a smiling face, "Jones has got it and he's gone!"

I could scarce repress a wild ejaculation of joy. Ernest will receive it to-night; he will be here to-morrow; I will be saved!

The day wore on and my mother did not appear. Toward evening Caroline came into my room, bearing a new dress upon her arm—a dress of white satin, richly embroidered and adorned with the costliest lace.

"O, Miss, aint it beautiful!" cried Caroline, displaying the dress before me, "and the bonnet and veil to match it, will be here to-night, an' your new di'monds. It's really fit for a queen."

It was indeed a magnificent dress.

"Who is it for?" I asked.

"Now, come, aint that good! 'Who is it for?' And you lookin' so innocent as you ask it. As if you did not know all the while, that it's your bridal dress, and that you are to be married airly in the mornin', after which you will set off on your bridal tower."

"Caroline, where did you learn this?" I asked, my heart dying within me.

"Why, how can you keep such things secret from the servants? Aint your mother been gettin' ready for it all day, and aint the servants been a-flyin' here and there, like mad? And Mr. Wareham's been so busy all day, and lookin' so pleased! Laws, Miss, how can you expect to keep such things from the servants?"

I heard this intelligence, conveyed in the garrulous manner of my maid, as a condemned prisoner might hear the reading of his death warrant. I saw that nothing could shake my mother in her purpose. She was resolved to accomplish the marriage at all hazards. In the morning I was to be married, transferred body and soul to the possession of a man whom I hated in my very heart.

But I resolved that he should not possess me living. He might marry me, but he

should only place the bridal ring upon the hand of a corpse.

The resolution came in a moment. How to accomplish it was next my thought.

Approaching Caroline in a guarded manner, I spoke of my nervousness and loss of sleep, and of a vial of *morphine* which my mother kept by her for a nervous affection.

"Could you not obtain it for me, Caroline? and without my mother seeing you, for she does not like me to accustom myself to the use of *morphine*. I am sadly in want of sleep, but I am so nervous that I cannot close my eyes. Get it for me," I put my arms about her neck—"that's a dear good girl."

"Laws, Miss, how kin one resist your purty eyes! It is in the casket on the bureau, is it? Just wait a moment;" she left the room and presently returned. She held the vial in her hand. I took it eagerly, pretended to place it in the drawer of a cabinet which stood near the bed, but, in reality, hid it in my bosom.

"Now mother, you may force on the marriage," I mentally ejaculated; "but your daughter has the threads of her own destiny in her hand."

How had I accustomed myself to the idea of suicide? It came upon me not slowly, but like a flash of lightning. It was in opposition to all the lessons I had learned from the good clergyman. 'But,' the voice of the tempter, seemed whispering in my ear—"while suicide is a crime, it becomes a virtue when it is committed to avoid a greater crime." It is wrong to kill my body, but infinitely worse to kill both body and soul in the prostitution of an unholy marriage.

As evening drew on I was left alone. I bathed myself, arranged my hair, and then attired myself in my white night-robe. And then, as the last glimpse of day came faintly through the window curtains, I sank on my knees by the bed, and prayed. O how in one vivid picture the holy memories of the past came upon me, in that awful moment!

"Ernest I will meet you in the better world!"

I drank the contents of the vial and rose to my feet. At the same instant the door opened and my mother appeared, holding a lighted candle in her hand. She saw me in

my white dress, was struck, perchance, by the wildness of my gaze, and then her eye rested upon the extended hand which held the vial.

"Well, Frank, how do you like your marriage dress," she began, but stopped, and changed color as she saw the vial.

"O, mother," I cried, "with my last breath I forgive you, and pray God that you may be able to forgive yourself."

I saw her horror-stricken look and I fell insensible at her feet.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SALE IS COMPLETE.

WHEN I awoke again—but I cannot proceed. There are crimes done every day, which the world knows by heart, and yet shudders to see recorded, even in the most carefully veiled phrase. But the crime of which I was the victim, was too horrible for belief. Wareham the criminal, my own mother the accomplice, the victim a girl of fifteen, who had been reared in purity and innocence afar from the world.

When I awoke again—for the potion failed to kill—I found myself in my room, and Wareham by my side, surveying me as a ghoul might look upon the dead body which he has stolen from the grave. The vial given to me by the maid did not contain a fatal poison, but merely a powerful anodyne, which sealed my senses for hours in sleep, and—combined with the reaction of harrowing excitement—left me for days in a state of half dreamy consciousness. I awoke * * * * My sight was dim, my senses dulled, but I knew that I was lost! Lost! O, how poor and tame that word, to express the living damnation of which I was the victim! The events of the next twenty-four hours, I can but vaguely remember. I was taken from the bed, arrayed in the bridal costume, and then led down stairs into the parlor. There was a marriage celebrated there (as I was afterward told)—yes! it was there that a minister of the Gospel, book in hand, sanctified with the name of marriage, the accursed bargain of which I was the victim—marriage, that sacrament which makes of home, God's holiest altar, the truest type of Heaven—marriage was, in

my case, made the cloak of an unspeakable crime. I can remember that I said some words, which my mother whispered in my ear, and that I signed my name to a letter which she had written. It was the letter which Ernest received, announcing my intention to visit Niagara. As for the letter which I had written to him, on the previous day, it never went farther than from the hands of Caroline to those of my mother. I was hurried into a carriage, Wareham by my side, and then on board of a steamboat, and have a vague consciousness of passing up the Hudson river. I did not clearly recover my senses, until I found myself at Niagara Falls, leaning on Wareham's arm, and pointed at by the crowd of visitors at the Falls, as "the beautiful bride of the Millionaire."

From the Falls, we passed up the Lakes, and then retraced our steps; visited the Falls again; journeyed to Montreal, and then home by Lake Champlain and the Hudson river. My mother did not accompany us. We were gone three months, and as the boat glided down the Hudson, the trees were already touched by autumn. As the boat drew near Tapaan bay, I concealed myself in my stateroom—I dared not look upon my cottage home.

We arrived at home toward the close of a September day. My mother met me at the door, calm and smiling. She gave me her hand—but I pushed it gently away. Wareham led me up the steps. I stood once more in that house, from which I had gone forth, like one walking in their sleep. And that night, in our chamber, Wareham and myself held a conversation, which had an important bearing on his life and mine.

I was sitting alone in my chamber, dressed in a white wrapper, and my hair flowing unconfined upon my shoulders; my hands were clasped and my head bent upon my breast. I was thinking of the events of the last three months, of all that I had endured from the man whose very presence in the same room, filled me with loathing. My husband entered, followed by Jenkins, who placed a lighted candle, a bottle of wine and glasses on the table, and then retired.

"What, is my pretty girl all alone, and in a thinking mood?" cried Wareham, seating himself by the table and filling a glass with

wine; "and pray, my love, what is the subject of your thoughts?"

And raising the glass to his lips, he surveyed me from head to foot with that gloating gaze which always gave a singular light to his eyes. His face was slightly flushed on the colorless cheeks. He had already been drinking freely, and was now evidently under the influence of wine.

"You have a fine bust, my girl," he continued, as though he was repeating the "points" of a horse; "a magnificent arm, a foot that beats the Medicean Venus all hollow, and limbs,——" he paused and sipped his wine, protruding his nether lip which now was scarlet red,——"such limbs! I like the expression of your eyes—there's fire in them, and your clear brown complexion, and your moist red lips, and,——" he sipped his wine again,——"altogether an elegantly built female."

And he rose and approached me. I also rose, my eyes flashing and my bosom swelling with suppressed rage.

"Wareham, I warn you not to touch me," I said in a low voice. "For three months I have been your prey. I will be so no longer. Before the world you may call me wife, if you choose—you have bought the right to do that—but I inform you, once for all, that henceforth we are strangers. Do you understand me, Wareham? I had as lief be chained to a corpse as to submit to be touched by you."

He fell back startled, his face manifesting surprise and anger, but in an instant his gaze was upon me again, and he indulged in a low burst of laughter.

"Come, I like this! It is a pleasant change from the demure, pious girl of three months ago to the full-blown tragedy queen." He sank into a chair and filled another glass of wine. "Be seated, Frank, I want to have a little talk with my pet."

I resumed my seat.

"You give yourself airs under the impression that you are my wife,—joint owner of my immense fortune,—my rich widow in perspective. Erroneous impression, Frank. I have a wife living in England."

The entirely malignant look, which accompanied these words, convinced me of their sincerity. For a moment I felt as though

an awful weight had crushed my brain, and by a glance at the mirror, I saw I was frightfully pale; but recovering myself by a strong exertion of will, I answered him in these words:

"Gentlemen, who allow themselves more than one wife at a time, are sometimes (owing to an unfortunate prejudice of society) invited to occupy an apartment in the state prison."

"And so you think you hold a rod over my head?"—he drank his wine—"but I have only one wife, Frank. The gentleman, who married you and me, was neither clergyman nor officer of the law, but simply a convenient friend. Our mock marriage was not even published in the papers."

Every word went like an icebolt to my heart. I could not speak. Then, as his eyes glared with a mingled look of hatred and of brutal passion, he sipped his wine as he surveyed me, and continued:

"You used the word 'bought' some time ago. You were right. 'Bought' is the word. You are simply my *purchase*. In Constantinople these things are easily managed; they keep an open market of fine girls there; but here we must find an affable mother, and pay a huge price—sometimes even marry the dear angels. I met your mother in Paris some years ago, and have been intimately acquainted with her ever since. When she first spoke of you, you were a child and I was weary of the world—jaded, sick of its pleasures, by which I mean its women. An idea struck me! What if this pretty little child, now being educated in innocence and pious ways, and so forth, should, in the full blossom of her beauty and piety—say at the ripe age of sixteen—become the consoler of my declining years? And so I paid the expenses of your education (your father consenting that I should *adopt* you, but very possibly understanding the whole matter as well as your mother), and you were accordingly *educated* for me. And when I first saw you, three months ago, it was your very innocence and pious way of talking which gave an irresistible effect to your beauty, and made me mad to possess you at all hazards."

It is impossible to depict the bitter mocking tone in which these words were spoken.

"I settled this mansion, the furniture, and so forth upon your mother, with ten thousand dollars. That was the price. You see how much you have cost me, my dear."

"But I will leave your accursed mansion." I felt, as I spoke, as though my heart was dead in my bosom. "I am not chained to you in marriage; I am, at least, free." I started to my feet and moved a step toward the door.

"But where will you go? back to your elderly clerical friend, with every finger leveled at you and every voice whispering 'There goes the mistress of the rich Englishman? Back to your village lover to palm yourself upon him as a pure and spotless maiden?'"

I sank into a chair and covered my face with my hands.

"Or will you begin the life of a poor seamstress, working sixteen hours per day for as many pennies, and at last, take to the streets for bread?"

His words cut me to the quick. I saw that there was no redemption in this world for a woman whose innocence has been sacrificed.

"But think better of it, my dear. Your mother shall surround you with the most select and fashionable company in New York,—she shall give splendid parties,—you will be the presiding genius of every festival. As for myself, dropping the name of husband, I will sink into an unobtrusive visitor. When you see a little more of the world you will not think your case such a hard one after all."

My face buried in my hands, I had not one word of reply. Lost,—lost,—utterly lost!

CHAPTER XV.

"LOST, LOST UTTERLY."

MY mother soon afterward gave her first party. It was attended by many of the rich and the fashionable of both sexes, and there were the glare of lights, the presence of beautiful women, and the wine-cup and the dance. The festival was prolonged till day-break, and another followed soon. The atmosphere was new to me. At first I was amazed, then intoxicated, and then—cor-

rupted. Anxious to bury the memory of my shame, to forget how lost and abandoned I was, to drown every thought of my childhood's home and of Ernest, who never could be mine, soon from a silent spectator I became a participant in the revels which, night after night, were held beneath my mother's roof. The persons who mingled in these scenes, were rich husbands who came accompanied by other men's wives; wives, who had sacrificed themselves in marriage, for the sake of wealth, to husbands twice their age, and these came with the husbands of other women,—in a word, all that came to the mansion and shared in its orgies, were either the victims or the criminals of society,—of a bad social world, which on every hand contrasts immense wealth and voluptuous indulgence with fathomless poverty and withering want, and which too often makes of a marriage but the cloak for infamy and prostitution. I shared in every revel, and lost myself in their maddening excitement. I was admired, flattered, and elevated at last to the position of presiding genius of these scenes. I became the "Midnight Queen." But let the curtain fall.

One night I noticed a new visitor, a remarkably handsome gentleman who sat near me at the supper-table, and whose hair and eyes and whiskers were black as jet. He regarded me very earnestly and with a look which I could not define.

"Don't think me impertinent," he said, and then added in a lower voice, "for I am your father, Frank. Don't call me Van Huyden—my name is Tarleton now."

Fearful that I might one day encounter Ernest, I wrote him a long letter breathing something of the tone of my early days—for I forgot for awhile my utterly hopeless condition—and informing him that mother and myself were about to sail for Europe. I wished him to believe that I was in a foreign land.

And one night, while the revel was progressing in the rooms below, Wareham entered my room and interested me in the description which he gave of a young lord, who wished to be introduced to me.

"Young, handsome, and pale as if from thought. The very style of man you admire, my pet."

"Let him come up," I answered, and Wareham retired.

I stood before the mirror as the young lord entered, and as I turned, I saw the face of my betrothed husband, Ernest Walworth.

Upon the horror of that moment I need not dwell.

He fell insensible to the floor, and was carried from the room and the house to the carriage by Wareham, who had led him to the place.

I have never seen the face of Ernest since that hour.

I received one letter from him—one only—in which he set forth the circumstances which induced him to visit my house, and in which he bade me "farewell."

He is now in a foreign land. The bones of his father rest in the village churchyard. The cottage home is desolate.

Wareham died suddenly about a year after our "marriage." The doctors said that his death was caused by an overdose of Morphine administered by himself in mistake. He died in our house, and as mother and myself stood over his coffin in the darkened room, the day before the funeral, I noticed that she regarded first myself and then the face of the dead profligate with a look full of meaning.

"Don't you think, dear mother," I whispered, "that the death of this good man was very singular?"

She made no reply, but still her face wore that meaning look.

"Would it be strange, mother, if your daughter, improving on your lessons, had added another feature to her accomplishments—had from the Midnight Queen,"—I lowered my voice—"become the Midnight Poisoner?"

I met her gaze boldly—and she turned her face away.

He died without ever a dog to mourn for him, and his immense wealth was inherited by a deserted and much abused wife, who lived in a foreign land.

Immense wealth in him bore its natural flower—a life of shameless indulgence, ending in a miserable death.

I did not shed very bitter tears at his funeral. Hatred is not the word to express the feeling with which I regard his memory.

Soon afterward my mother was taken ill, and wasted rapidly to death. Hers was an awful death-bed. The candle was burning to its socket, and mingled its rays with the pale moonlight which shone through the window-curtains. Her brown hair, streaked with gray, falling to her shoulders, her form terribly emaciated, and her eyes glaring in her shrunken face, she started up in her bed, clutched my hands in hers, and—begged me to forgive her.

My heart was stone. I could not frame one forgiving word.

As her chilled hands clutched mine, she rapidly went over the dark story of her life,—how from an innocent girl, she had been hardened into the thing she was,—and again, her eyes glaring on my face, besought my forgiveness.

"I forgive you, Mother," I said slowly, and she died.

My father was not present at her death, nor did he attend her funeral.

And for myself—what has the Future in store for me?

O, for Rest! O, for Forgiveness! O, for a quiet Sleep beneath the graveyard sod!

And with that aspiration for Rest, Forgiveness, Peace, uttered with all the yearning of a heart sick to the core, of life and all that life can inflict or give, ended the manuscript of FRANCES VAN HUYDEN, the MIDNIGHT QUEEN.

It is now our task to describe certain scenes which took place in New York, between Nightfall and Midnight, on this 23d of December, 1844. And at midnight we will enter THE TEMPLE where the death's head is hidden among voluptuous flowers.

NEW YORK:

ITS

UPPER-TEN AND LOWER MILLION.

PART SECOND.

"FROM NIGHTFALL UNTIL MIDNIGHT."

DEC. 23, 1844.

CHAPTER I.

BLOODHOUND AND THE UNKNOWN.

Two persons were sitting at a table, in the Refectory beneath Lovejoy's Hotel. One of these drank brandy and the other drank water. The brandy drinker was our friend Bloodhound, and the drinker of water was a singular personage, whose forehead was shaded by a broad-brimmed hat, while the lower part of his face was covered by a blue kerchief, which was tied over his throat and mouth.

Seated at a table in the center of the place, these two conversed in low tones, while all around was uproar and confusion.

"You found these persons?" said the gentleman with the broad-brimmed hat and blue neckerchief.

"I didn't do anything else," replied the Hound—"I met you here, at Lovejoy's, about dusk. You were a tee-total stranger to me. You says, says you, that you'd like to do a good turn to Harry Royalton, and at the same time *fix* this white nigger and his sister—you know who I mean?"

"Randolph and Esther—"

"Well, we closed our bargain. You gave me a note to Randolph and one to his sister. I hunted 'em out and delivered your notes, and here I am."

Bloodhound smiled one of his most frightful smiles, and consoled himself with a glass of brandy.

"Where did you find these persons?" asked Blue Kerchief.

"At a tip-top boardin' house up town, accordin' to your directions. I fust saw the boy and delivered your note, and arter he

was gone I saw the gal and did the same. Now, old hoss, do you think they'll come?"

"You saw the contents of those notes?"

"I did. I saw you write 'em and read 'em afore you sealed 'em up. The one to Randolph requested him to be at a sartin place on the Five Points about twelve o'clock. An' the one to Esther requested her to be at the Temple about the same hour. Now do you think they'll come?"

"You have seen Godlike and Royalton?" said the unknown, speaking thickly through the neckerchief which enveloped his mouth.

"Godlike will be at the Temple as the clock strikes twelve, and Harry and me will be at Five Points, at the identical spot—you know—at the very same identical hour."

"That is sufficient. Here is the sum I promised you," and the stranger laid two broad gold pieces on the table: "we must now part. Should I ever need you, we will meet again. Good night."

And the stranger rose, and left the refectory, Bloodhound turning his head over his shoulder as he watched his retreating figure with dumb amazement.

"Cool! I call it cool!" he soliloquised; "Waiter, see here; another glass of brandy. Yet this is good gold; has the right ring, hey? Judas Iscariot! Somehow or 'nother, everything I touch turns to gold. Wonder what the chap in the blue handkercher has agin the white nigger and his sister? Who keers? At twelve to-night Godlike will have the gal, and Harry and I will have the nigger. Ju-das Iscariot!" Here let us leave the Bloodhound for awhile, to his solemn meditations and his glass of brandy.

CHAPTER II.

THE CANAL STREET SHIRT STORE.

"Do you call them stitches? S-a-y? How d'ye expect a man to git a livin' if he's robbed in that way? Do you call that a shirt—s-a-y?"

"Indeed I did my best—"

"Did your best? I should like to know what you take me for? D'ye think I'm a fool? Did not I give you the stuff for five shirts, and fust of all, I exacted a pledge of five dollars from you, to be forfeited if you spoilt the stuff—"

"And you know I was to receive two shillings for each shirt. I'll thank you to pay me my money, and restore my five dollars and let me go—"

"Not a copper. This shirt is spoilt. And if those you have in your arms are no better, why they are spoilt too—"

"They're made as well as the one you hold—no better."

"Then I can't sell 'em for old rags. Just give 'em to me, and clear out—"

"At least give me back my five dollars—"

"Not a copper. Had you finished these shirts in the right style, they'd a-sold for fifteen dollars. As it is, the money is forfeited,—I mean the five dollars which you left with me as a pledge. I can't employ you any more. Just give me the other four shirts, and clear out."

The storekeeper and the poor girl were separated by a counter, on which was placed a showy case. She was dressed in a faded calico gown, and a shawl as worn and faded, hung about her shoulders. She wore a straw bonnet, although it was a night in mid-winter; and beneath her poverty-stricken dress, her shoes were visible: old and worn into shreds they scarcely clung to her feet. Her entire appearance indicated extreme poverty.

The storekeeper, who stood beneath the gas-light, was a well preserved and portly man of forty years, or more, with a bald head, a wide mouth and a snub nose. Rings glistened on his fat fingers. His black velvet vest was crossed by a gold chain. His spotless shirt bosom was decorated by a flashy

breastpin. He spoke sharp and quick, and with a proper sense of his dignity as the Proprietor of the "ONLY UNIVERSAL SHIRT STORE, No. —, Canal St., New York."

Between him and the girl was a glass case, in which were displayed shirts of the most elegant patterns and elaborate workmanship. Behind him were shelves, lined with boxes, also filled with shirts, whose prices were labeled on the outside of each box. At his right-hand, was the shop-window,—a small room in itself—flaring with gas, and crowded with shirts of all imaginable shapes—shirts with high collars, Byron collars, and shirts without any collars at all;—shirts with plaits large, small and infinitesimal—shirts with ruffles, shirts with stripes and shirts with spots;—in fact, looking into the window, you would have imagined that Mr. SCREW GRABB was a very Apostle of clean linen, with a mission to clothe a benighted world, with shirts; and that his Temple, "the ONLY UNIVERSAL SHIRT STORE," was the most important place on the face of the globe. There, too, appeared eloquent appeals to passers-by. These were printed on cards, in immense capitals,—*"SHIRTS FOR THE MILLION! THE GREAT SHIRT EMPORIUM! WHO WOULD BE without a shirt, when Screw Grabb sells them for only \$1? THIS IS the ONLY SHIRT STORE,"*—and so on to the end of the chapter.

The conversation which we have recorded, took place in this store, soon after 'gas-light' on the evening of Dec. 23d, 1844, between Mr. SCREW GRABB and the POOR GIRL, who stood before him, holding a small bundle in her arms.

"You surely do not mean to retain my money?" said the girl—and she laid one hand against the counter, and attentively surveyed the face of Mr. Grabb—"You find fault with my work—"

"Never saw *wuss* stitchin' in my life," said Grabb.

"But that is no reason why you should refuse to return the money which I placed in your hands. Consider, Sir, you will distress me very much. I really cannot afford to lose that five dollars,—indeed—"

She turned toward him a face which, impressed as it was with a look of extreme distress, was also invested with the light of a

clear, calm, almost holy beauty. It was the face of a girl of sixteen, whom thought and anxiety had ripened into grave and serious womanhood. Her brown hair was gathered neatly under her faded straw bonnet, displaying a forehead which bore traces of a corroding care; there was light and life in her large eyes, light and life without much of hope; there was youth on her cheeks and lips; youth fresh and virgin, and unstained by the touch of sin.

"Will you give me them four shirts,—s-a-y?" was the answer of Grabb,—“them as you has in your bundle there?”

The girl for a moment seemed buried in reflection. May-be the thought of a dreary winter night and a desolate home was busy at her heart. When she raised her head she fixed her eyes full upon the face of Mr. Grabb, and said distinctly:

"I will *not* give you these shirts until you return my money."

"What's that you say? You won't give 'em back—wont you?" and Mr. Grabb darted around the counter, yardstick in hand. "We'll see,—we'll see. Now just hand 'em over!"

He placed himself between her and the door, and raised the yardstick over her head.

The girl retreated step by step, Mr. Grabb advancing as she retreated, with the yardstick in his fat hand.

"Give 'em up,—” he seized her arm, and attempted to tear the bundle from her grasp. "Give 'em up you——” he applied an epithet which he had heard used by a manager of a theater to the unfortunate girls in his employment.

At the word, the young woman retreated into a corner behind the counter, her face flushed and her eyes flashing with an almost savage light—

"You cowardly villain!" she said, "to insult me because I will not permit you to rob me. O, you despicable coward—for shame!"

The look of her eye and curl of her lip by no means pleased the corpulent Grabb. He grew red with rage. When he spoke again it was in a loud voice and with an emphatic sweep of the yardstick.

"If you don't give 'em up, I'll—I'll

break every bone in your body. You hussy! You ——! What do you think of yourself—to attempt to rob a poor man of his property?"

These words attracted the attention of the passers-by; and in a moment, the doorway was occupied by a throng of curious spectators. The poor girl, looking over Grabb's shoulders, saw that she was the object of the gaze of some dozen pairs of eyes.

"Gentlemen, this hussy has attempted to rob me of my property! I gave her stuff sufficient to make five shirts, and she's spoilt 'em so I can't sell 'em for old rags, and—and she won't give 'em up."

"If they aint good for nothing, what d'ye want with 'em?" remarked the foremost of the spectators.

But Grabb was determined to bring matters to a crisis.

"Now, look here," he said, holding the yardstick in front of the girl, and thus imprisoning her in the corner; "if you don't give 'em up, I'll strip the clothes from your back."

The girl turned scarlet in the face; her arms sank slowly to her side; the bundle fell from her hands; she burst into tears.

"Shame! shame!" cried one of the spectators.

"It's the way he does business," added a voice in the background. "He won't give out any work unless the girl, who applies for it, places some money in his hands as a pledge. When the work is brought into the store, he pretends that it's spoilt, and keeps the money. That's the way he raises capital!"

"What's that you say?" cried Grabb, turning fiercely on the crowd, who had advanced some one or two paces into the store. "Who said that?"

A man in a coarse, brown bang-up advanced from the crowd—

"I said it, and I'll stand to it! Aint you a purty specimen of a bald-headed Christian, to try and cheat the poor girl out of her hard-earned money?"

"I'll call the police," cried Grabb.

"What a pattern! what a beauty!" continued the man in the brown bang-up; "why rotten eggs 'ud be wasted on such a carcass as that!"

"Police! Police!" screamed Grabb,—
"Gentlemen, I'd like to know if there is any
law in this land?"

While this altercation was in progress the
poor girl—thoroughly ashamed to find her-
self the center of a public broil—covered
her face with her hands and wept as if her
heart would break.

"Take my arm," said a voice at her side;
"there will be a fight. Quick, my dear Miss,
you must get out of this as quick as
possible."

The speaker was a short and slender man,
wrapped in a Spanish mantle, and his hat
was drawn low over his forehead.

The girl seized his arm, and while the
crowd formed a circle around Grabb and the
brown bang-up, they contrived to pass unob-
served from the store. Presently the poor
girl was hurrying along Canal street, her
hand still clasping the arm of the stranger
in the cloak.

"Bad business! Bad business!" he said
in a quick, abrupt tone. "That Grabb's a
scoundrel. Here's Broadway, my dear, and
I must bid you good-night. Good-night,—
good-night."

And he left the poor girl at the corner of
Broadway and Canal street. He was lost in
the crowd ere she was aware of his departure.
She was left alone, on the street corner, in
the midst of that torrent of life; and it was
not until some moments had elapsed that
she could fully comprehend her desolate
condition.

"It was the last five dollars I had in the
world! What can I do! In the name of
God, what can I do!"

She looked up Broadway—it extended,
there, one glittering track of light.

"Not a friend, and not a dollar in the
world!"

She looked down Broadway—far into the
distance it extended, its million lights over-
arched by a dull December sky.

"Not a friend and not a dollar!"

She turned down Broadway with languid
and leaden steps. A miserably clad and
heart-broken girl, she glided among the
crowds, which lined the street, like a specter
through the mazes of a banquet.

Poor girl! Down Broadway, until the
Park is passed, and the huge Astor House

glares out upon the darkness from its hun-
dred windows. Down Broadway, until you
reach the unfinished pile of Trinity Church,
where heaps of lumber and rubbish appear
among white tombstones. Turn from Broad-
way and stride this narrow street which
leads to the dark river: your home is there.

Back of Trinity Church, in Greenwich
street, we believe, there stands on this
December night a four storied edifice, ten-
anted, only a few years ago, by a wealthy
family. Then it was the palace of a man
who counted his wealth by hundreds of
thousands. Now it is a palace of a different
sort; look at it, as from garret to cellar it
flashes with light in every window.

The cellar is the home of ten families.

The first floor is occupied as a beer
"saloon;" you can hear men getting drunk
in three or four languages, if you will only
stand by the window for a moment.

Twenty persons live on the second floor.

Fifteen make their home on the third
floor.

The fourth floor is tenanted by nineteen
human beings.

The garret is divided into four apartments;
one of these has a garret-window to itself,
and this is the home of the poor girl.

She ascended the marble staircase which
led from the first to the fourth floor. At
every step her ear was assailed with curses,
drunken shouts, the cries of children, and a
thousand other sounds, which, night and
day resounded through that palace of rags
and wretchedness. Feeble and heart-sick
she arrived at length in front of the garret
door, which opened into her home.

She listened in the darkness; all was still
within.

"He sleeps," she murmured, "thank
God!" and opened the door. All was dark
within, but presently, with the aid of a
match, she lighted a candle, and the details
of the place were visible. It was a nook of
the original garret, fenced off by a partition
of rough boards. The slope of the roof
formed its ceiling. The garret window
occupied nearly an entire side of the place.
There was a mattress on the floor, in one cor-
ner; a small pine table stood beside the par-
tition; and the recess of the garret-window
was occupied by an old arm-chair.

This chair was occupied by a man whose body, incased in a faded wrapper, reminded you of a skeleton placed in a sitting posture. His emaciated hands rested on the arms, and his head rested helplessly against the back of the chair. His hair was white as snow; it was scattered in flakes about his forehead. His face, furrowed in deep wrinkles, was lividly pale; it resembled nothing save the face of a corpse. His eyes, wide open and fixed as if the hand of death had touched him, were centered upon the flame of the candle, while a meaningless smile played about his colorless lips.

The girl kissed him on the lips and forehead, but he gave no sign of recognition save a faint laugh, which died on the air ere it was uttered.

For the poor man, prematurely old and reduced to a mere skeleton, was an idiot.

"Oh, my God, and I have not bread to feed him!" No words can describe the tone and look with which the poor girl uttered these words.

She flung aside her bonnet and shawl.

Then it might be seen that, in spite of her faded dress, she was a very beautiful young woman; not only beautiful in regularity of features, but in the whiteness of her shoulders, the fullness of her bust, the proportions of her tall and rounded form. Her hair, escaping from the ribbon which bound it, streamed freely over her shoulders, and caught the rays of the light on every glossy wave.

She leaned her forehead upon her head, and—thought.

Hard she had tried to keep a home for the poor IDIOT, who sat in the chair—very hard. She had tried her pencil, and gained bread for awhile, thus; but her drawings ceased to command a price at the picture store, and this means of subsistence failed her. She had taught music, and had been a miserable dependent upon the rich; been insulted by their daughters, and been made the object of the insulting offers of their sons. And forced at length by the condition of her IDIOT FATHER, to remain with him, in their own home—to be constantly near him, day and night—she had sought work at the shirt store on Canal street, and been robbed of the treasure which she had accumulated through

the summer; an immense treasure—FIVE DOLLARS.

She had not a penny; there was no bread in the closet; there was no fire in the sheet iron stove which stood in one corner; her Idiot Father, her iron fate were before her—harsh and bitter realities.

She was thinking.

Apply to those rich relations, who had known her father in days of prosperity? No. Better death than that.

She was thinking. Her forehead on her hand, her hair streaming over her shoulders, her bosom which had never known even the thought of pollution, heaving and swelling within her calico gown—she was thinking.

And as she thought, and *thought* her hair began to burn, and her blood to bound rapidly in her veins.

Her face is shaded by her hand, and a portion of her hair falls over that hand; therefore you cannot tell her thoughts by the changes of her countenance.

I would not like to know her thoughts.

For there is a point of misery, at which but two doors of escape open to the gaze of a beautiful woman, who struggles with the last extreme of poverty: one door has the GRAVE behind it, and the other, —

Yes, there are some thoughts which it is not good to write on paper. It was in the midst of this current of dark and bitter thoughts, that the eye of the young woman wandered absently to the faded shawl which she had thrown across the table.

"What is this? A letter! Pinned to my shawl—by whom?"

It was indeed a letter, addressed to her, and pinned to her shawl by an unknown hand.

She seized it eagerly, and opened it, and read.

Her face, her neck, and the glimpse of her bosom, opening above her dress, all became scarlet with the same blush. Still her eyes grew brighter as she read the letter, and incoherent ejaculations passed from her lips.

The letter was written—so it said—by the man who had taken her from the store on Canal street. Its contents we may not guess, save from the broken words of the agitated girl.

"At twelve o'clock, at 'THE TEMPLE,'"

whose street and number you will find on the inclosed card."

And a card dropped from the letter upon the table. She seized it eagerly and clasped it as though it was so much gold.

"*THE TEMPLE,*" she murmured again, and her eyes instinctively wandered to the face of her father

Then she burst into a flood of tears.

For three hours, while the candle burned toward its socket, she meditated upon the contents of that letter.

At last she rose, and took from a closet near the door, a mantilla of black velvet, the only garment which the pawnbroker had spared. It was old and faded; it was the only relic of better days. She resumed her bonnet and wound the mantilla about her shoulders and kissed her IDIOT FATHER on the lips and brow. He had fallen into a dull, dreamless sleep, and looked like a dead man with his fallen lip and half-shut eyes.

"*THE TEMPLE!*" she exclaimed and attentively perused the card.

Then extinguishing the candle, she wound a coverlet about her father's form, and left him there alone in the garret. She passed the threshold and went down the marble stairs. God pity her.

Yes, God pity her!

CHAPTER III.

"DO THEY ROAR?"

At nine o'clock, on the night of December 23d, 1844, —

"Do they roar?" said Israel Yorke, passing his hand through his gray whiskers, as he sat at the head of a large table covered with green baize.

It was in a large square room, on the second story of his Banking House—if Israel's place of business can be designated by that name. The gas-light disclosed the floor covered with matting, and the high walls, overspread with lithographs of unknown cities and imaginary copper-mines. There were also three lithographs of the towns in which Israel's principal Banks were situated. There was Chow Bank and Muddy Run, and there in all its glory was Terrapin Hollow. In each of these distant towns, located somewhere in New Jersey or Pennsylvania—

or Heaven only knows where—Israel owned a Bank, a live Bank, chartered by a State Legislature, and provided with a convenient President and Cashier. Israel was a host of stockholders in himself. He had an office in New York for the redemption of the notes of the three Banks; it is in the room above this office that we now behold him.

"Do they roar?" he asked, and arranged his spectacles on his turn up nose, and grinned to himself until his little black eyes shone again.

"Do they roar?" answered the voice of Israel's man of business, who sat at the lower end of the green baize table—"Just go to the window and hear 'em! Hark! There it goes again. It sounds like fourth of July."

Truth to say, a strange ominous murmur came from the street—a murmur composed of about an equal quantity of curses and groans.

"There's six thousand of 'em," said the man of business; "The street is black with 'em. And all sorts o' nasty little boys go about with placards on which such words are inscribed: '*Here's an orphan—one o' them that was cheated by Israel Yorke and his Three Banks.*' Hark! There it goes again!"

The man of business was a phlegmatic individual of about forty years; a dull heavy face adorned with green spectacles, and propped by a huge black stock and a pair of immense shirt collars. Mr. FETCH was indeed Israel's MAN; he in some measure supplied the place of the late lamented Jedediah Buggles, Esq., 'whose dignity of character and strict integrity,' etc., etc., (for the rest, see obituaries on Buggles in the daily papers).

"Fetch, they *do* roar," responded Israel. "Was there notice of the failure in the afternoon papers?"

"Had it put in myself. Dilated upon the robbery which was committed on you last night, in the cars; and spoke of your disposition to redeem the notes of Chow Bank, Muddy Run and Terrapin Hollow, as soon as—you *could* make it convenient."

"Yes, Fetch, in about a week these notes can be bought for ten cents on the dollar," calmly remarked Yorke, "they're mostly in the hands of market people, mechanics, day-laborers, servant-maids, and those kind of

people, who *can't afford to wait*. Well, Fetch, what were they sellin' at to-day?"

"Three shillings on the dollar. You know we only failed this mornin'," answered Fetch.

"Yes, yes, about a week will do it"—Israel drew forth a gold pencil, and made a calculation on a card,—“In about a week they'll be down to ten cents on the dollar. We must buy 'em in quietly at that rate; our friends on Wall street will help us, you know. Well, let's see how the profit will stand—there are in circulation \$300,000 of Chow Bank notes—”

“And \$150,000 of Muddy Run,” interrupted Fetch.

“And \$200,000 of Terrapin Hollow,” continued Yorke,—“Now supposin' that there are altogether \$500,000—a half million of these notes now in circulation—we can buy 'em in *quietly* you know, at ten cents on the dollar, for some—some—yes, \$50,000 will do it. That will leave a clear profit of \$450,000. Not so bad,—eh, Fetch?”

“But you forget how much it cost you to get the charters of these banks—” interrupted Fetch. “The amount of champagne that I myself forwarded to Trenton and to Harrisburg, would float a small brig. Then there was some ready money that you loaned to Members of Legislature—put that down Mr. Yorke.”

“We'll say \$5000 for champagne, and \$25,000 loaned to Members of Legislature (though they don't bring anything near that now), why we have a total of \$25,000 for *expenses incurred in procuring charters*. Deduct that from \$450,000 and you still have \$425,000. A neat sum, Fetch.”

“Yes, but you must look to your character. You must come out of it with flyin' colors. After nearly all the notes have been bought in, by ourselves or our agents, we must announce that having recovered from our late reverses, we are now prepared to redeem all our notes, dollar for dollar.”

“And Fetch, if we manage it right, there'll be only \$10,000 worth left in circulation, at the time we make the announcement. That will take \$10,000 from our total of \$425,000, leavin' us still the sum of \$415,000. A pretty sum, Fetch.

“You may as well strike off that \$15,000 for extra expenses,—paragraphs in some of

the newspapers,—grand juries, and other little incidents of that kind. O, you'll come out of it with *character*.”

“Ghoul of the Blerze will assail me, eh?” said Israel, fidgeting in his chair: “He'll talk o' nothin' else than Chow Bank, Muddy Run and Terrapin Hollow, for months to come,—eh, Fetch?”

“For years, for years,” responded Fetch, “It will be nuts for Ghoul.”

“And that cursed affair last night!” continued Yorke, as though thinking aloud, “Seventy-one thousand gone at one slap.”

Fetch looked funnily at his principal from beneath his gold spectacles: “No? It was real then? I thought—”

Mr. Yorke abruptly consigned the thoughts of Mr. Fetch to a personage who shall be nameless, and then continued:

It was *real*,—a *bona fide* robbery. Seventy-one thousand at a slap! By-the-bye, Fetch, has Blossom been here to-night—Blossom the police officer?”

“Couldn't get in; too much of a crowd in the street.”

“I did not intend him to come by the front door. He was to come up the back way,—about this hour—he gave me some hope this afternoon. *That* was an unfortunate affair last night!”

“How they roar! Listen!” said Fetch, bending himself into a listening attitude.

And again that ominous sound came from the street without,—the combined groans and curses of six thousand human beings.

“Like buffaloes!” quietly remarked Mr. Yorke.

“Like demons!” added Mr. Fetch. “Hear 'em.”

“Was there much fuss to-day, when we suspended, Fetch?”

“Quantities of market people, mechanics, widows and servant maids,” said the man of business. “I should think you'd stood a pretty good chance of being torn to pieces, if you'd been visible. Had this happened south, you'd have been tarred and feathered. Here you'd only be tore to pieces.”

A step was heard in the back part of the room, and in a moment Blossom, in his pictorial face and bear-skin over-coat, appeared upon the scene.

“What is the matter with your head?”

asked Mr. Fetch,—“Is that a handkerchief or a towel?” He pointed to something like a turban, which Poke-Berry Blossom wore under his glossy hat.

Blossom sunk sullenly into a chair, without a word.

“What’s the matter?” exclaimed Yorke, “Have you—”

“Suppose you had sixteen inches taken out of yer skull,” responded Blossom in a sullen tone, “You’d know what was the matter. Thunder!” he added, “this is a rum world!”

“Did you—” again began Yorke, brushing his gray whiskers and fidgeting in his chair.

“Yes I did. I tracked ’em to a groggery up town airly this evenin’. I had ’em all alone, to myself, up stairs. I caught the young ’un examinin’ the valise—I seed the dimes with my own eyes. I—”

“You arrested them?” gasped Yorke.

“How could I, when I aint a real police, and hadn’t any warrant? I did grapple with ’em; but the young ’un got out on the roof with the valise, and I was left to manage the old ’un as best I could. I tried to make him b’lieve that I had a detachment down stairs, but he gi’n me a lick over the topknot that made me see Fourth of July, I tell you. There I laid, I don’t know how long. When I got my senses, they was gone.”

“But you pursued them?” asked Yorke, with a nervous start.

“With a hole in my head big enough to put a market-basket in?” responded Blossom, with a pitying smile, “what do you think I’m made of? Do you think I’m a Japan mermaid or an Egyptian mummy?”

It will be perceived that Mr. Blossom said nothing about the HOUSE which stood next to the YELLOW MUG; he did not even mention the latter place by name. Nor did he relate how he pursued Nameless into this house, and how after an unsuccessful pursuit, he returned into the garret of the Mug, where Ninety One, (who for a moment or two had been hiding upon the roof,) grappled with him, and laid him senseless by a well planted blow. Upon these topics Mr. Blossom maintained a mysterious silence. His reasons for this course may hereafter appear.

“And so you’ve given up the affair?” said Yorke, sinking back into his chair.

Now the truth is, that Blossom, chafed by his inquiries and mortified at his defeat, was cogitating an important matter to himself—“Can I make anything by givin’ Israel into the hands of the mob? I might lead ’em up the back stairs. Lord! how they’d make the fur fly! *But who’d pay me?* The italicized query troubled Blossom and made him thoughtful.

“And so the seventy thousand ’s clean gone,” exclaimed Fetch, in a mournful tone: “It makes one melancholy to think of it.”

“Pardon me, Mr. Yorke, for this intrusion,” said a bland voice, “but I have followed Mr. Blossom to this room. I caught sight of him a few moments ago as he left Broadway, and tried to speak to him as he pushed through the crowd in front of your door, but in vain. So being exceedingly anxious to see him, I was forced to follow him up stairs, into your room.”

“Colonel Tarleton!” ejaculated Yorke.

“The handsom’ Curnel!” chorussed Blossom.

It was indeed the handsome Colonel, who with his white coat buttoned tightly over his chest and around his waist, stood smiling and bowing behind the chair of Berry Blossom.

“You did not tell any one of the back door,” cried Yorke,—“If you did—”

“Why then, (you were about to remark I believe,) we should have a great many more persons in the room, than it would be pleasant for you to see, *just now.*”

The Colonel made one of his most elegant bows as he made this remark. Mr. Yorke bit his nails but made no reply.

“Mr. Blossom, a word with you.” The Colonel took the police officer by the arm and led him far back into that part of the room most remote from the table.

“What’s up, Mister?” asked Blossom, arranging his turban.

As they stood there, in the gloom which pervaded that part of the room, the Colonel answered him with a low and significant whisper:

“Do you remember that old ruffian who was charged last night in the cars with—”

“You mean old Ninety-One, as he calls

hisself," interrupted Blossom—"Well, I guess I do."

"Very good," continued the Colonel.—"Now suppose this ruffian had concealed himself in the house of a wealthy man, with the purpose of committing a robbery this very night?"

Blossom was all ears.

"Well, well,—drive ahead. Suppose,—suppose,"—he said impatiently.

"Not so fast. Suppose, further, that a gentleman who had overheard this villain plotting this purposed crime, was to give you full information in regard to the affair, could you,—could you,—when called upon to give evidence before the court, forget the name of this gentleman?"

"I'd know no more of him than an unborn baby," eagerly whispered Blossom.

"Hold a moment. This gentleman overhears the plot, in the room of a *certain house*, not used as a church, precisely. The gentleman does not wish to be known as a visitor to *that house*,—you comprehend? But in *that house*, he happens to hear the ruffian and his young comrade planning this robbery. Himself unseen, he hears their whole conversation. He finds out that they intend to enter the house where the robbery is to take place, by a false key and a back stairway. Now—"

"You want to know, in straight-forward talk," interrupted Blossom, "whether, when the case comes to trial, I could remember having overheard the convict and the young 'un mesself? There's my hand on it, Curnel. Just set me on the track, and you'll find that I'll never say one word about you. Beside, I was arter these two covies, this very night,—I seed 'em with my own eyes, in the garret of the Yellow Mug."

"You did!" cried the Colonel, with an accent of undisguised satisfaction. "Then possibly you may remember that you overheard them planning this burglary, as you listened behind the garret door?"

"Of course I can," replied Blossom, "I remember it *quite* plain. Jist tell me the number of the house that is to be robbed, and I'll show you fireworks."

The Colonel's face was agitated by a smile of infernal delight. Leaving Blossom

for a moment, he paced the floor, with his finger to his lip.

"Pop and Pill will leave town to-morrow," he muttered to himself, "and they'll keep out of the way until the storm blows over. This fellow will go to the house of Sowers, inform him of the robbery, a search will be made, and Ninety-one discovered in one room, and the corpse of Evelyn in the other. Just at that hour I'll happen to be passing by, and in the confusion I'll try to secure this youthful secretary of Old Sowers. I shall want him for the twenty-fifth of December. As for the other, why, Frank must take care of him. Shall Ninety-one come to a hint of the murder?"—the Colonel paused and struck his forehead. "Head, you have never failed me, and will not fail me now!"

He turned to Blossom, and in low whispers the twain arranged all the details of the affair. They conversed together there in the gloom until they perfectly understood each other, Blossom turning now and then to indulge in a quiet laugh, and the Colonel's dark eyes flashing with earnestness, and may be, with the hope of gratified revenge. At length they shook hands, and the Colonel approached the table:

"Mr. Yorke, I have the honor to wish you a very good evening," said the Colonel, and after a polite bow, he departed.

"I leave him with his serenaders," he muttered as he disappeared. "This murder off my hands, and the private secretary in my power, I think I will hold the trump card on the Twenty-fifth of December!"

With this muttered exclamation he went down the back stairway.

"Yorke, my genius!" cried Blossom, clapping the financier on the back, "if I dont have them \$71,000 dollars before twenty-four hours, you may call me—you may call me,—most anything you please. By-the-by, did you hear that howl? Good-night, Yorke." And he went down the back stairway.

The financier, coughing for breath, (for the hand of Blossom had been somewhat emphatic), fixed his gold specs, and brushed his gray whiskers, and turning to Mr. Fetch, said gayly,

"He looks as if he was on the right track; dont he, Fetch?"

Fetch said he did; and presently he also retired down the back stairway, promising to see his Principal at an early hour on the morrow. "How they do roar!" he ejaculated, as he disappeared.

Yorke was alone. He shifted and twisted uneasily in his chair. His little black eyes shone with peculiar luster. He sat for a long time buried in thought, and at last gave utterance to these words:

"I think I'd better retire until the storm blows over, leaving Fetch to bring in my notes, and manage affairs. To what part of the world shall I go? Well,—w-e-l-l!—Havana, yes, that's the word, Havana! But first I must see the result of this Van Huyen matter on the Twenty-fifth, and provide myself with a *companion*—a pleasant *companion* to cheer me in my loneliness at Havana. Ah!" the man of money actually breathed an amorous sigh,—"*twelve to-night*, —**THE TEMPLE!**—that's the word."

And in the street without, black with heads, there were at least three thousand people who would have cut the throat of Israel, had they once laid hands upon him.

"**THE TEMPLE!**" he again ejaculated, and sinking back in his chair, he inserted his thumbs in the armholes of his vest, and resigned himself to a pleasant dream.

Leaving Israel Yorke for a little while, we will trace the movements, and listen to the words of a personage of far different character.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SEVEN VAULTS.

ABOUT the hour of nine o'clock, on the 23d of December, a gentleman, wrapped in the folds of a Spanish mantle, passed along Broadway, on his way to the Astor House. Through the glare and glitter, the uproar and the motion of that thronged pathway, he passed rapidly along, his entire appearance and manner distinguishing him from the crowd. As he came into the glare of the brilliantly-lighted windows, his face and features, disclosed but for an instant, beneath his broad sombrero, made an impression

upon those who beheld them, which they did not soon forget. That face, unnaturally pale, was lighted by eyes that shone with incessant luster; and its almost death-like pallor was in strong contrast with his moustache, his beard and hair, all of intense blackness. His dark hair, tossed /by the winter winds, fell in wavy tresses to the collar of his cloak. His movements were quick and impetuous, and his stealthy gait, in some respects, reminded you of the Indian. Altogether, in a crowd of a thousand you would have singled him out as a remarkable man,—one of those whose faces confront you at rare intervals, in the church, the street, in the railroad-car, on ship-board, and who at first sight elicit the involuntary ejaculation, "That man's history I would like to know!"

Arrived at the Astor House he registered his name, **GASPAR MANUEL, Havana.**

He had just landed from the Havana steamer.

As he wrote his name on the Hotel book, he uncovered his head, and—by the gas light which shone fully on him,—it might be seen that his dark hair, which fell to his shoulders, was streaked with threads of silver. The vivid brightness of his eyes, the deathlike pallor of his face, became more perceptible in the strong light; and when he threw his cloak aside, you beheld a slender frame, slightly bent in the shoulders, clad in a dark frock coat, which, single breasted, and with a strait collar, reached to the knees.

His face seemed to indicate the traveler who has journeyed in many lands, seen all phases of life, thought much, suffered deeply, and at times grown sick of all that life can inflict or bestow; his attire indicated a member of some religious organization, perchance a member of that society founded by Loyola, which has sometimes honored, but oftener blasphemed, the name of **JESUS**. Directing his trunks,—there were some three or four, huge in size, and strangely strapped and banded—to be sent to his room. Gaspar Manuel resumed his cloak and sombrero, and left the hall of the hotel.

It was an hour before he appeared again. As he emerged from one of the corridors into the light of the hall, you would have

scarcely recognized the man. In place of his Jesuit-like attire, he wore a fashionably made black dress coat, a snow-white vest, black pants and neatly-fitting boots. There was a diamond in the center of his black scarf, and a massy gold chain across his vest. And a diamond even more dazzling than that which shone upon his scarf, sparkled from the little finger of his left-hand.

But the change in his attire only made that face, framed in hair and beard, black as jet, seem more lividly pale. It was a strange faded face,—you would have given the world to have known the meaning of that thought which imparted its incessant fire to his eyes.

Winding his cloak about his slender frame, and placing his sombrero upon his dark hair, he left the hotel. Passing with his quick active step along Broadway, he turned to the East river, and soon entered a silent and deserted neighboring house. Silent and deserted, because it stands in the center of a haunt of trade, which in the day-time, mad with the fever of traffic, was at night as silent and deserted as a desert or a tomb.

He paused before an ancient dwelling-house, which, wedged in between huge warehouses, looked strangely out of place, in that domain of mammon. Twenty-one years before, that dwelling-house had stood in the very center of the fashionable quarter of the city. Now the aristocratic mansions which once lined the street had disappeared; and it was left alone, amid the lofty walls and closed windows of the warehouses which bounded it on either hand, and gloomily confronted it from the opposite side of the narrow street.

It was a double mansion—the hall door in the center—ranges of apartments on either side. Its brick front, varied by marble over the windows, bore the marks of time. And the wide marble steps, which led from the pavement to the hall door—marble steps once white as snow—could scarcely be distinguished from the brown sandstone of the pavement. In place of a bell, there was an unsightly-looking knocker, in the center of the massive door; and its roof, crowned with old fashioned dormer-windows, and heavy along the edges with cumbrous wood-work, presented a strange contrast to the monotonous flat roofs of the warehouses on either side.

Altogether, that old-fashioned dwelling looked as much out of place in that silent street of trade, as a person attired in the costume of the Revolution,—powdered wig, ruffled shirt, wide skirted coat, breeches and knee-buckles,—would look, surrounded by gentlemen attired in the business-like and practical costume of the present day. And while the monotonous edifices on either side, only spoke of Trade—the Rate of Exchange—the price of Dry Goods,—the old dwelling-house had something about it which breathed of the associations of Home. There had been marriages in that house, and deaths: children had first seen the light within its walls, and coffins, containing the remains of the fondly loved, had emerged from its wide hall door: dramas of every-day life had been enacted there: and there, perchance, had also been enacted one of those tragedies of every-day life which differ so widely from the tragedies of fiction, in their horrible truth.

There was a story about the old dwelling which, as you passed it in the day-time, when it stood silent and deserted, while all around was deafening uproar, made your heart dilate with involuntary curiosity to know the history of the ancient fabric, and the history of those who had lived and died within its walls.

Gaspar Manuel ascended the marble steps, and with the knocker sounded an alarm, which echoing sullenly through the lofty hall, was shortly answered by the opening of the door.

In the light which flashed upon the pallid visage of Gaspar Manuel, appeared an aged servant, clad in gray livery faced with black velvet.

"Take these letters to your master, and tell him that I am come," said Gaspar in a prompt and decided tone, marked, although but slightly, with a foreign accent. He handed a package to the servant as he spoke.

"But how do you know that my master is at home?"—The servant shaded his eyes with his withered hand, and gazed hesitatingly into that strange countenance, so lividly pale, with eyes unnaturally bright and masses of waving hair, black as jet.

"Ezekiel Bogart lives here, does he not?"

"That is my master's name."

"Take these letters to him then at once, and tell him I am waiting."

Perchance the soft and musical intonations of the stranger's voice had its effect upon the servant, for he replied, "Come in, sir," and led the way into the spacious hall, which was dimly lighted by a hanging lamp of an antique pattern.

"Step in there, sir, and presently I will bring you an answer."

The aged servant opened a door on the left side of the hall and Gaspar Manuel entered a square apartment, which had evidently formed a part of a larger room. The walls were paneled with oak; a cheerful wood fire burned in the old-fashioned arch; an oaken table, without covering of any sort, stood in the center; and oaken benches were placed along the walls. Taking the old chair,—it stood by the table,—Gaspar Manuel, by the light of the wax candle on the table, discovered that the room was already occupied by some twenty or thirty persons, who sat upon the oak benches, as silent as though they had been carved there. Persons of all classes, ages, and with every variety of visage and almost every contrast of apparel. There was the sleek dandy of Broadway; there the narrow-faced vulture of Wall street; there some whose decayed attire reminded you either of poets out of favor with the Magazines, or of police officers out of office: one whose half Jesuit attire brought to mind a Puseyite clergyman; and one or two whose self-complacent visages reminded one of a third-rate lawyer, who had just received his first fee; in a word, types of the varied and contrasted life which creeps or throbs within the confines of the large city. Among the crowd, were several whose rotund corporations and evident disposition to shake hands with themselves, indicated the staid man of business, whose capital is firm in its foundation, and duly recognized in the solemn archives of the Bank. A man of gray hairs, clad in rags, sat in a corner by himself; there was a woman with a veil over her face; a boy with half developed form, and lip innocent of hair: it was, altogether, a singular gathering.

The dead silence which prevailed was most remarkable. Not a word was said.

Not one of those persons seemed to be aware of the existence of the others. As motionless as the oak benches on which they sat, they were waiting to see Ezekiel Bogart, and this at the unusual hour of ten at night.

Who was Ezekiel Bogart? This was a question often asked, but which the denizens of Wall street found hard to answer. He was not a merchant, nor a banker, nor a lawyer, nor a gentleman of leisure, although in some respects he seemed a combination of all.

He occupied the old-fashioned dwelling; was seen at all sorts of places at all hours; and was visited by all sorts of people at seasons most unusual. Thus much at least was certain. But what he was precisely, what he exactly followed, what the sum of his wealth, and who were his relations,—these were questions shadowed in a great deal more mystery than the reasons which induce a Washington Minister of State to sanction a worn-out claim, of which he is at once the judge, lawyer and (under the rose) sole proprietor.

The transactions of Ezekiel Bogart were quite extensive: they involved much money and ramified through all the arteries of the great social world of New York. But the exact nature of these transactions? All was doubt,—no one could tell.

So much did the mystery of Mr. Bogart's career puzzle the knowing ones of Wall street, that one gentleman of the Green Board went quite crazy on the subject,—after the fourth bottle of champagne—and offered to bet Erie Rail-road stock against New Jersey copper stock, that no one could prove that Bogart had ever been born.

"Who is Ezekiel Bogart?"

No doubt every one of the persons here assembled, in the oak paneled room, can return some sort of answer to this question; but will not their answers contradict each other, and render Ezekiel more mythical than ever?

"Sir, this way," said the aged servant, opening the door and beckoning to Gaspar Manuel.

Gaspar followed the old man, and leaving the room, ascended the oaken staircase, whose banisters were fashioned of solid mahogany.

On the second floor he opened a door,—“In there, sir,” and crossing the threshold, Gaspar Manuel found himself in the presence of Ezekiel Bogart.

It was a square apartment, lined with shelves from the ceiling to the floor, and illumined by a lamp, which hanging from the ceiling, shed but a faint and mysterious light through the place. In the center was a large square table, whose green baize surface was half concealed by folded packages, opened letters, and huge volumes, bound in dingy buff. Without windows, and warmed by heated air, this room was completely fire-proof—for the contents of those shelves were too precious to be exposed to the slightest chance of destruction.

In an arm-chair, covered with red morocco, and placed directly beneath the light, sat Ezekiel Bogart; a man whom we may as well examine attentively, for we shall not soon see his like again. His form bent in the shoulders, yet displaying marks of muscular power, was clad in a loose wrapper of dark cloth, with wide sleeves, lined with red. A dark skull-cap covered the crown of his head; and a huge green shade, evidently worn to protect his eyes from the light, completely concealed his eyes and nose, and threw its shadow over his mouth and chin. A white cravat, wound about his throat in voluminous folds, half concealed his chin; and his right hand—sinewy, yet colorless as the hand of a corpse—which was relieved by the crimson lining of the large sleeve—was laid upon an open letter.

Gaspar Manuel seated himself in a chair opposite this singular figure, and observed him attentively without uttering a word. And Ezekiel Bogart, whose eyes were protected by the huge green shade, seemed for a moment to study with some earnestness, the pallid face of Gaspar Manuel.

“My name is Ezekiel Bogart,” he spoke in a voice so low as to be scarcely audible,—“and I am the General Agent of Martin Fulmer.”

He paused as if awaiting a reply from Gaspar Manuel, but Gaspar Manuel did not utter a word.

“You come highly recommended by Mr. John Grubb, who is Mr. Fulmer’s agent on the Pacific coast,” continued Ezekiel. “He

especially commends you to my kindness and attention, in the letter which I hold in my hand. He desires me to procure you an early interview with my principal, Dr. Martin Fulmer. He also states that you have important information in your possession, in regard to certain lands in the vicinity of the Jesuit Mission of San Luis, near the Pacific coast,—lands purchased some years ago, from the Mexican government, by Dr. Martin Fulmer. Now, in the absence of the Doctor, I will be most happy to converse with you on the subject”—

“And I will be happy to converse on the subject,” exclaimed Gaspar, in his low voice and with a slight but significant smile, “but first I must see Dr. Martin Fulmer.”

Ezekiel gave a slight start—

“But you may not be able to see Dr. Martin Fulmer for some days,” he said. “His movements are uncertain; it is at times very difficult to procure an interview with him.”

“I must see him,” replied Gaspar Manuel in a decided voice, “and before the Twenty-Fifth of December.”

Again Ezekiel started:

“Soh! He knows of the Twenty-Fifth!” he muttered. After a moment’s hesitation he said aloud: “This land which the Doctor bought from the Mexican government, and which he sent John Grubb to overlook, is fertile, is it not?”

Gaspar Manuel answered in a low voice, whose faintest tones were marked with a clear and impressive emphasis:

“The deserted mission house of San Luis stands in the center of a pleasant valley, encircled by fertile hills. Its walls of intermingled wood and stone are almost buried from view by the ever-green foliage of the massive trees which surround it. Once merry with the hum of busy labor, and echoing with the voice of prayer and praise, it is now silent as a tomb. Its vineyards and its orchards are gone to decay,—orchards rich with the olive and the apple, the pomegranate and the orange, stand neglected and forsaken, under an atmosphere, as calm, a climate as delicious as southern Italy. And the hills and fields, which once produced the plantain and banana, cocoanut, indigo and sugar-cane—which once resounded with the voices of hundreds of Indian laborers,

who yielded to the rule of the Jesuit Fathers—are now as sad and silent as a desert. And yet a happier sight you cannot conceive than the valley of the San Luis, in the lap of which stands the deserted mission-house. It is watered by two rivulets, which, flowing from the gorges of distant hills, join near the mission-house, into a broad and tranquil river, whose shores are always bright with the verdure of spring. The valley is surrounded, as I have said, by a range of rolling hills, which formerly yielded, by their inexhaustible fertility, abundant wealth to the Fathers. Behind these, higher and abrupt hills arise, clad with ever-green forests. In the far distance, rise the white summits of the Sierra Nevada."

"This mission was one of the many established between the Sierra Nevada and the Pacific coast," interrupted Ezekiel, "by zealous missionaries of the Papal Church. If I mistake not, having obtained large grants of land from the Mexican government, they gathered the Indians into missions, reared huge mission-houses, and employed the Indians in the cultivation of the soil."

"Not only in California, on the west side of Sierra Nevada, but also far to the east of that range of 'Snow Mountains' abounded these missions, ruled by the Fathers and supported by the labor of the submissive Indians. But now, for hundreds and hundreds of miles, you will find the mission-houses silent and deserted. The rule of the Fathers passed away in 1836—in one of the thousand revolutions of Mexico—the missions passed into the hands of private individuals, and in some cases the Indians were transferred with the land."

"But the mission-house of San Luis?"

"Is claimed by powerful members of the Society of Jesus, who residing in the city of Mexico, have managed to keep a quiet hold upon the various governments, which nave of late years abounded in that unhappy republic. They claim the mission-house and the lands, originally granted sixty years ago, to Brothers of their order by the Government, and they claim certain lands, not named in the original grant."

He paused, but Ezekiel Bogart completed the sentence:

"Lands purchased some years since, from

the Government by Dr. Martin Fulmer? Is their claim likely to be granted?"

"That is a question upon which I will be most happy to converse with Dr. Martin Fulmer," was the bland reply of Gaspar Manuel.

"These lands are fertile—that is, as fertile as the lands immediately attached to the mission?"

"Barren, barren as Zahara," replied Gaspar. "A thousand acres in all, they are bounded by desolate hills, desolate of foliage, and broken into ravines and gorges, by mountain streams. You stand upon one of the hills, and survey the waste which constitutes Martin Fulmer's lands, and you contrast them with the mission lands, and feel as though Zahara and Eden stood side by side before you. A gloomier sight cannot be imagined."

"And yet," said Ezekiel, "these lands are situated but a few leagues from the mission-house. It is strange that the Jesuit Brothers should desire to possess such a miserable desert. Do you imagine their motives?"

"It is about *their motives* that I desire to speak with Dr. Martin Fulmer," and Gaspar shaded his eyes with the white hand which blazed with the diamond ring.

There was a pause, and beneath his uplifted hand, Gaspar Manuel attentively surveyed Ezekiel Bogart, while Ezekiel Bogart, as earnestly surveyed Gaspar Manuel, under the protection of the green shade which concealed his eyes.

"You seem to have a great many visitors to-night," said Gaspar, resting his arm on the table and his forehead on his hand; "allow me to ask, is it usual to transact business, at such a late hour, in this country?"

"The business transacted by Dr. Martin Fulmer, differs widely from the business of Wall street," replied Ezekiel, dryly.

"The property of Gulian Van Huyden, has by this time doubled itself?" asked Gaspar, still keeping his eyes on the table. Ezekiel started, but Gaspar continued, as though thinking aloud—"Let me see: at the time of his death, the estate was estimated at two millions of dollars. Of this \$1,251,000 was invested in real estate in the city of New York; \$100,000 in bank and other kinds of stock; \$50,000 in lands in the

Western country; \$1,000 in a tract of one thousand acres in Pennsylvania; and \$458,000 in bank notes and gold. Then the Van Huyden mansion and grounds were valued at \$150,000. Are my figures correct, sir?"

As though altogether amazed by the minute knowledge which Gaspar Manuel, seemed to possess, in regard to the Van Huyden estate, Ezekiel did not reply.

"By this time this great estate has no doubt doubled, perhaps trebled itself."

Ezekiel raised his hand to his mouth, and preserved a statue-like silence.

"This room, which is no doubt vaulted and fire-proof, contains I presume, all the important records, title-deeds and other papers relating to the estate."

Ezekiel rose from his chair, and slowly lighted a wax candle which stood upon the table. Gathering the dark wrapper, lined with scarlet, about his tall form which seemed bent with age, he took the silver candlestick in his right hand, and swept aside a curtain which concealed the shelves behind his chair. A narrow doorway was disclosed.

"Will you step this way, for a few moments, sir?" he said, pointing to the doorway, as he held the light above his head, thus throwing the shadow of the green shade completely over his face.

Gaspar Manuel without a word, rose and followed him. They entered a room or rather vault, resembling in the general features the one which they had left. It was racked and shelved; the floor was brick and the shelves groaned under the weight of carefully arranged papers.

"This room or vault, without windows as you see, and rendered secure, beyond a doubt, from all danger of robbery or of fire, is one of seven," said Ezekiel. "In this room are kept all title deeds and papers, which relate to the THOUSAND ACRES in Pennsylvania."

"The Thousand acres in Pennsylvania!" echoed Gaspar, "surely all these documents and papers, do not relate to that tract, which Van Huyden originally purchased for one thousand dollars?"

"Twenty-one years ago, they could have been purchased for a thousand dollars," answered Ezekiel: "twenty-one years, to a country like this, is the same as five hundred

to Europe. Those lands could not now be purchased for twenty millions."

"Twenty millions!"

"They comprise inexhaustible mines of coal and iron—the richest in the state," answered Ezekiel, quietly, and drawing a curtain, he led the way into a third vault.

"Here," he said, holding the light above his head, so that its rays fell full upon the pallid face of Gaspar, while his own was buried in shadow; "here are kept all papers and title-deeds, which relate to the lands in the western country—lands purchased for fifty thousand dollars, at a time when Ohio was a thinly settled colony and all the region further west a wilderness—but lands which now are distributed through five states, and which, dotted with villages, rich in mines and tenanted by thousands, return an annual rent of, ——"

He paused.

"Of I do not care to say how many dollars. Enough, perhaps, to buy a German prince or two. This way, sir."

Passing through a narrow doorway, they entered a third vault, arched and shelved like the other.

"This place is devoted to the Van Huyden mansion," said Ezekiel, pointing to the well-filled shelves. "It was worth \$150,000 twenty-one years ago, but now a flourishing town has sprung up in the center of its lands; mills and manufactories arise in its valleys; a population of five thousand souls exists, where twenty-one years ago there were not two hundred souls, all told. And these five thousand are laboring night and day, not so much for themselves as to increase the wealth of the Van Huyden estate."

"And all this is estimated at, ——," began Gaspar.

"We will not say," quietly responded Ezekiel. "Here are the title-deeds of the town, of the mansion, of manufactory and mill, all belong to the estate; not one of the five thousand souls owns one inch of the ground on which they toil, or one shingle of the roof beneath which they sleep.

They entered the fourth vault.

"This is dedicated to the 'Real Estate in the city of New York,'" said Ezekiel—worth \$1,521,000, twenty-one years ago, and now—well, well—New York twenty-

one years ago was the presumptuous rival of Philadelphia. She is now the city of the Continent. And this real estate is located in the most thriving portions of the city—among the haunts of trade near the Battery, and in the region of splendid mansions up town."

"And you would not like to name the usual revenue?"—a smile crossed the pale visage of Gaspar Manuel.

Ezekiel led the way into the fifth vault.

"Matters in regard to Banks and bank stock are kept here," he said, showing the light of the candle upon the well laden shelves—"Rather an uncertain kind of property. The United States' Bank made a sad onslaught upon these shelves. But let us go into the next room."

And they went into the sixth room.

"This is our bank," said Ezekiel; "that is to say, the Treasury of the Van Huyden estate, in which we keep our *specie basis*. You perceive the huge iron safe which occupies nearly one-half of the apartment? Dr. Martin Fulmer carries the Key of course, and with that Key he can perchance, at any moment, command the destinies of the commercial world. A golden foundation is a solid foundation, as the world goes."

As though for the moment paralyzed, by the revelation of the immense wealth of the Van Huyden estate, Gaspar Manuel stood motionless as a statue, resting one arm upon the huge safe and at the same time resting his forehead in his hand.

"We will now pass into the seventh apartment," said Ezekiel, and in a moment they stood in the last vault of the seven. "It is arched and shelved, you perceive, like the others; and the shelves are burdened with carefully-arranged papers——"

"Title-deeds, I presume, title-deeds and mortgages?" interrupted Gaspar Manuel.

"No," answered Ezekiel, suffering the rays of the candle to fall upon the crowded shelves. "Those shelves contain *briefs* of the personal history of permanent persons of this city, of many parts of the Union, I may say, of many parts of the globe. Sketches of the personal history of prominent persons, and of persons utterly obscure: records of remarkable facts, in the history of particular families: brief but interesting portraiture of

incidents, societies, governments and men; the contents of those shelves, sir, is knowledge, and knowledge that, in the grasp of a determined man, would be a fearful Power. For," he turned and fixed his gaze on Gaspar Manuel; "for you stand in the Secret Police Department of the Van Huyden estate."

These last words, pronounced with an emphasis of deep significance, evidently aroused an intense curiosity in the breast of Gaspar Manuel.

"Secret Police Department!" he echoed, his dark eyes flashing with renewed luster.

"Even so," dryly responded Ezekiel, "for the Van Huyden estate is not a secret society like the Jesuits, nor a corporation like Trinity Church, nor a government like the United States or Great Britain, but it is a *Government based upon Money and controlled by the Iron Will of One Man*. A Government based, I repeat it, upon incredible wealth, and absolutely in the control of one man, who for twenty-one years, has devoted his whole soul to the administration of the singular and awful Power intrusted to him. Such a Government needs a Secret Police, ramifying through all the arteries of the social world—and you now stand in the office of that wide-spread and almost ubiquitous Police."

"A secret society may be disturbed by internal dissensions," said Gaspar Manuel, as though thinking aloud; "a government may be crippled by party jealousies, but this Government of the Van Huyden Estate, based upon money, is simply controlled by one man, who knows his mind, who sees his way clear, whose will is deepened by a conviction—perhaps a fanaticism—as unrelenting as death itself. Ah! the influence of such a Government is fearful, nay horrible, to contemplate!"

"It is, it is indeed," said Ezekiel, in a low and mournful voice; "and the responsibility of Dr. Martin Fulmer, most solemn and terrible."

"But what would become of this Government, were Dr. Martin Fulmer to die before the 25th of December?" asked Gaspar Manuel.

"But Dr. Martin Fulmer will not die before the 25th of December," responded Ezekiel, in a tone of singular emphasis.

"And this immense power will drop from his grasp on the 25th of December," continued Gaspar Manuel. "Who will succeed him? Into whose hands will it fall—this incredible power?"

"Your question will be answered on the 25th of December," slowly responded Ezekiel, and motioning to Gaspar, he retraced his steps through the six vaults or apartments, and presently stood in the first of the seven vaults, where we first beheld him.

He seated himself in the huge arm-chair, while Gaspar Manuel, resuming his cloak and sombrero, stood ready to depart.

"Now that I have given you some revelation of the immense resources of the Van Huyden Estate," said Ezekiel, as he attentively surveyed that cloaked and motionless figure; "you will, I presume, have no objection to converse with me in regard to the lands on the Pacific, as freely and as fully, as though you stood face to face with Dr. Martin Fulmer?"

"Pardon," said Gaspar Manuel with a low brow, "the facts in my possession are for the ear of Dr. Martin Fulmer, and for his ear alone."

"Very well, sir," replied Ezekiel, in a tone of impatience, "as you please. Call here to-morrow at—" he named the hour—"and you shall see Dr. Martin Fulmer."

"I will be here at the hour," and bidding good-night! to Ezekiel, Gaspar bowed and moved to the door. He paused for a moment on the threshold —

"Pardon me, sir, but I would like to ask you a single question."

"Well, sir."

"I am curious to know what has induced you, to disclose to me—almost an entire stranger—the secrets and resources of the Van Huyden Estate?"

"Sir," responded Ezekiel Bogart, in a voice which deep and stern, was imbued with the consciousness of Power; "you will excuse me from giving you a direct reply. But you would not have crossed the threshold of any one of the seven apartments, had I not been conscious, that it is utterly out of your power, to *abuse* the knowledge which you have obtained."

Again Gaspar Manuel bowed, and without a word, left the room.

Ezekiel Bogart was alone.

He folded his arms and bowed his head upon his breast. Strange and tumultuous thoughts, stamped their deep lines upon his massive brow. The dimly-lighted room was silent as the grave, and the light fell faintly upon that singular figure, buried in the folds of the dark robe lined with scarlet, the head covered with an unsightly skullcap, the eyes veiled by a green shade, the chin and mouth concealed by the cumbrous cravat. Lower drooped the head of Ezekiel, but still the light fell upon his bared forehead, and showed the tumultuous thoughts that were working there. The very soul of Ezekiel, retired within itself and absent from all external things, was buried in a maze of profound, of overwhelming thought.

The aged servant entered with a noiseless step, "Here is a letter, sir," he said. But Ezekiel did not hear. "Sir, a letter from Philadelphia, by a messenger who has just arrived." But Ezekiel, profoundly absorbed, was unconscious of his presence.

The aged servant advanced, and placed the letter on the table, directly before his absent-minded master. He touched Ezekiel respectfully on the shoulder and repeated in a louder voice—"A letter, sir, an important letter from Philadelphia, by a messenger who has just arrived."

Ezekiel started in his chair, like one suddenly awakened from a sound slumber. At a glance he read the superscription of the letter: "*To Ezekiel Bogart, Esq.—Important.*"

"The handwriting of the Agent whom I yesterday sent to Philadelphia!" he ejaculated, and opened the letter. These were its contents:

Philadelphia, Dec. 23, 1844.

SIR:—I have just returned to the city, from the Asylum—returned in time to dispatch this letter by an especial messenger, who will go to New York, in the five o'clock train. At your request, and in accordance with your instructions, I visited the Asylum for the Insane, this morning, expecting to bring away with me the Patient whom you named. *He escaped some days ago*—so the manager informed me. And since his escape no intelligence has been had of his move-

ments. I have not time to add more, but desire your instructions in the premises.

Yours truly, H. H.

To EZEKIEL BOGART, Esq.

No sooner had Ezekiel scanned the contents of this epistle, than he was seized with powerful agitation.

"Escaped! The child of Gulian escaped!" he cried, and started from the chair—"tomorrow he was to be here, in this house, in readiness for the Day. Escaped! Why did not the manager at once send me word? Ah, woe, woe!" He turned to the aged servant, and continued, "Bring the person who brought this letter, to me, at once, quick! Not an instant is to be lost."

And as the aged servant left the room, Ezekiel sank back in his chair, like one who is overpowered by a sudden and unexpected calamity.

CHAPTER V.

THE LEGATE OF THE POPE.

As Gaspar Manuel left the house of Ezekiel Bogart, he wrapped his cloak closely about his form, and drew his sombrero low upon his face. His head drooped upon his breast as he hurried along, with a quick and impetuous step. Soon he was in Broadway again, amid its glare and uproar, but he did not raise his head, nor turn his gaze to the right or left. Head drooped upon his breast and arms gathered tightly over his chest, he threaded his way through the mazes of the crowd, as absent from the scene around him, as a man walking in his sleep.

Arrived at the Astor House, he hurried to his room and changed his dress. Divesting himself of his fashionable attire—black dress-coat, scarf, white-vest—he clad himself in a single-breasted frock-coat, buttoned to the throat and reaching below the knees. Above its straight collar, a glimpse of his white-cravat was perceptible. And over the dark surface of his coat, was wound a massy gold chain, to which was appended, a Golden Seal and a Golden Cross. Over this costume, which in its severe simplicity, displayed his slender frame to great advantage, he threw his cloak, and once more hurried from the Hotel.

Pausing on the sidewalk in front of the Astor, he engaged a hackney-coach—

"Do you know where, ———, resides?" he asked of the driver; a huge individual, in a white overcoat, and oil-skin hat.

"Sure and I does jist that," was the answer. "It's meself that knows the residence of his Riv'ence as well as the nose on my face."

"Drive me there, at once," said Gaspar Manuel.

And presently the carriage was rolling up Broadway, bearing Gaspar Manuel to the residence of a prominent dignitary of the Roman Catholic Church.

As the little clock on the mantle struck the hour of eleven, the Prelate was sitting in an easy chair, in front of a bright wood fire. It was in a spacious apartment, connected with his library by a narrow door. Two tall wax candles, placed upon the table by his side, shed their light over the softly carpeted floor, the neatly papered walls, and over the person of the Prelate, who was seated at his ease, in the center of the scene.

The Prelate was a man of some forty-five years, with boldly marked features, and sharp fiery eyes, indicating an incessantly active mind. The light fell mildly on his tonsured crown, encircled by brown hair, streaked with gray, and his bold forehead and compressed lip. His form broad in the shoulders, muscular in the chest, and slightly inclined to corpulence, was clad in a long robe of dark purple, reaching from his throat to his feet. There was a cross on his right breast and a diamond ring on the little finger of his left-hand.

Thus alone, in his most private room—the labors of the day accomplished and the world shut out—the Prelate was absorbed in the mazes of a delightful reverie.

He fixed his eyes upon a picture which hung over the mantle, on the left. It was a portrait of Cardinal Dubois, who in the days of the Regency, trailed his Red Hat in the mire of nameless debaucheries.

"Fool!" muttered the Prelate, "he had not even sense to hide his vices, under the thinnest vail of decency."

He turned his eyes to a portrait which hung over the mantle on the right. "There was a man!" he muttered, and a smile shot

over his face. The portrait was that of Cardinal Richelieu who butchered the Huguenots in France, while he was supplying armies to aid the Protestants of Germany. Richelieu, one of those Politicians who seem to regard the Church simply as a machine for the advancement of their personal ambition,—the cross as a glittering bauble, only designed to dazzle the eyes of the masses,—the seamless Cloak of the Redeemer, as a cloak intended to cover outrages the most atrocious, which are done in the name of God.

"He was a man!" repeated the Prelate. "He moulded the men and events of his time, and, ——" he stopped. He smiled. "Why cannot I mould to my own purposes, the men and events of my time, using the Church as a convenient engine?" Some thought like this seemed to flit over his mind.

Having attentively turned his gaze from Cardinal Dubois to Cardinal Richelieu, the Prelate at length fixed his eyes upon a marble bust, which stood in the center of the mantle. And his lips moved, and his eyes flashed, and his right hand waved slowly to and fro, before his face, as though he saw a glorious future, drawn in the air, by a prophetic pencil.

The marble bust upon which he gazed, was the bust of one, who from the very lowest walk in life had risen to be Pope: and one of the strongest, sternest Popes that ever held the scepter of the Vatican.

"It can be won," ejaculated the Prelate, "and the means lie here," he placed his hand upon a Map which lay on the table. It was a map of the American Continent.

"I came up stairs without ceremony," said a calm even voice; "your Grace's servant informed me, that you expected me."

"I am heartily glad to see you, my Lord," said the Prelate, turning abruptly and confronting his visitor: "it is now two years since I met your Lordship in Rome. It was, you remember, just before you departed to Mexico, as the Legate of His Holiness. How has it been with you since I saw you last?"

"I have encountered many adventures," answered "His Lordship," the Legate, "and none more interesting than those connected with the Mission of San Luis and its lands—"

Thus saying the Legate—in obedience to a courteous gesture from the Prelate—flung aside his hat and cloak, and took a seat by the table.

The Legate was none other than our friend Gaspar Manuel.

They were in singular contrast, the Legate and the Prelate. The muscular form and hard *practical* face of the Prelate, was certainly, in strong contrast with the slender frame, and pale—almost corpse-like-face of the Legate, with its waving hair and beard of inky blackness. Conscious that their conversation might one day have its issue, in events or in disclosures of vital importance, they for a few moments surveyed each other in silence. When the Prelate spoke, there was an air of deference in his manner, which showed that he addressed one far superior to himself in position, in rank and power.

We will omit the Lordships and Graces with which these gentlemen, interlarded their conversation. Lordships and Graces and Eminences, are matters with which we simple folks of the American Union, are but poorly acquainted.

"You are last from Havana?" asked the Prelate.

"Yes," answered the Legate: "and a month ago I was in the city of Mexico; two months since in California, at the mission of San Luis."

"And the Fathers are likely to regain possession of the deserted mission? You intimated so much in the letter which you were kind enough to write me from Havana."

"They are likely to regain possession," said the Legate.

"But the mission will be worth nothing without the thousand acres of *barren* land," continued the Prelate: "Will the *barren* land go with the mission?"

"In regard to that point I will inform you fully before we part. For the present let me remind you, that it was an important part of my mission, to the New World, to ascertain the prospects of the Church in that section of the Continent, known as the United States. Allow me to solicit from you, a brief exposition of the condition and prospects of our Church in this part of the globe."

The Prelate laid his hand upon the American Continent:

"The north, that is the Republic of the United States, will finally absorb and rule over all the nations of the Continent. By war, by peace, in one way or another the thing is certain—"

He paused: the Legate made a gesture of assent.

"It is our true policy, then, to absorb and rule over the Republic of the North. To make our Church the secret spring of its Government; to gradually and without exciting suspicion, mould every one of its institutions to our own purposes; to control the education of its people, and bend the elective franchise to our will. Is not this our object?"

Again the Legate signified assent.

"And this must be done, by making New York the center of our system. New York is in reality, the metropolis of the Continent; from New York as from a common center, therefore all our efforts must radiate. From New York we will control the Republic, shape it year by year to our purposes; as it adds nation after nation to its Union, we will make our grasp of its secret springs of action, the more certain and secure; and at last the hour will come, when this Continent apparently one united republic, will in fact, be the richest altar, the strongest abiding-place, the most valuable property of the Church. Yes, the hour will come, when the flimsy scaffolding of Republicanism will fall, and as it falls, our Church will stand revealed, her foundation in the heart of the American Republic; her shadow upon every hill and valley of the Continent. For you know," and his eye flashed, "that our battle against what is called Democracy and Progress, is to be fought not in the Old World, where everything is on our side, but in the New World, where these damnable heresies do most abound."

"True," interrupted the Legate, thoughtfully; "the New World is the battle-field of opinions! Here the fight must take place."

"You ask how our work is to begin? Here in New York we will commence it. Hundreds of thousands of foreigners of our faith arrive in this city every year. Be it our task to plant an eternal barrier between these men, and those who are American citizens by birth. To prevent them from

mingling with the American People, from learning the traditions of American history, which give the dogma of Democracy its strongest hold upon the heart, to isolate them, in the midst of the American nation. In a word, the first step of our work is, to array at the zealous *Foreign* party, an opposition to an envenomed *Native American* party."

"This you have commenced already," said the Legate,—"it was in Mexico, that I heard of Philadelphia last summer—of Philadelphia on the verge of civil war with Protestants and Catholics flooding the gutters with their blood, while the flames of burning churches lit up the midnight sky."

"The outbreak was rather premature," calmly continued the Prelate, "but it has done us good. It has invested us with the light of martyrdom, the glory of persecution. It has drawn to us the sympathies of tens of thousands of Protestants, who, honestly disliking the assaults of the mere 'No-Popery' lecturers upon our church, as honestly entertain the amusing notion, that the Rulers of our church, look upon 'Toleration, Liberty of Conscience,' and so forth, with any feeling, but profound contempt."

"Ah!" ejaculated the Legate, and a smile crossed his face, "deriving strength from the illimitable bitterness of the Native American and Foreign political parties, we already hold in many portions of the Union, the ballot box in our grasp. We can dictate terms to both political parties. Their leaders court us. Editors who know that we rooted Protestantism out of Spain, by the red hand of the Inquisition,—that for our faith we made the Netherlands rich in gibbets and graves,—that we gave the word, which started from its scabbard the dagger of St. Bartholomew,—grave editors, who know all this and more, talk of us as the friends of Liberty and Toleration—"

"But there was Calvert, the founder of Maryland, and Carroll the signer of the Declaration of Independence, these were Catholics, were they not, Catholics and friends of Liberty?"

"They were *laymen*, not *rulers*, you will remember," said the Prelate, significantly: "at best they belonged to a sort of Catholics, which, in the Old World, we have done our best to root out of the church. But here,

however, we can use their names and their memories, as a cloak for our purposes of ultimate dominion. But to resume: both political parties court us. Their leaders, who loathe us, are forced to kneel to us. Things we can do freely and without blame, which damn any Protestant sect but to utter: The very 'No-Popery' lecturers aid us: they attack doctrinal points in our church, which are no more assailable than the doctrinal points of any one of their ten thousand sects: they would be dangerous, indeed, were they to confine their assaults to the simple fact, that ours is not so much a church as an EMPIRE, having for its object, the temporal dominion of the whole human race, to be accomplished under the vail of spiritualism. An EMPIRE built upon the very sepulcher of Jesus Christ,—an EMPIRE which holds Religion, the Cross, the Bible, as valuable just so far as they aid its efforts for the temporal subjection of the world,—an EMPIRE which, using all means and holding all means alike lawful, for the spread of its dominion, has chosen the American Continent as the scene of its loftiest triumph, the theater of its final and most glorious victories!"

As he spoke the Atheist Prelate started from his chair.

Far different from those loving Apostles, who through long ages, have in the Catholic Church, repeated in their deeds, the fullness of Love, which filled the breast of the Apostle John,—far different from the Fenelons and Paschals of the church,—this Prelate was a cold-blooded and practical Atheist. Love of women, love of wine, swayed him not. Lust of power was his spring of action—his soul. He may have at times, assented to Religion, but that he believed in it as an awful verity, as a Truth worth all the physical power and physical enjoyment in the universe,—the Prelate never had a thought like this. An ambitious atheist, a Borgia without his lust, a Richelieu with all of Richelieu's cunning, and not half of Richelieu's intellect, a cold-blooded, practical schemer for his own elevation at any cost,—such was the Prelate. Talk to him of Christ as a consoler, as a link between crippled humanity and a better world, as of a friend who meets you on the dark highway of life, and takes you from sleet and cold, into the

light of a dear, holy home,—talk to him of the love which imbues and makes alive every word from the lips of Christ,—ha! ha! Your atheistical Prelate would laugh at the thought. He was a worldling. Risen from the very depths of poverty, he despised the poor from whom he sprung. For years a loud and even brawling advocate of justice for Ireland,—an ecclesiastical stump orator; a gatherer of the pennies earned by the hard hand of Irish labor,—he was the man to blaspheme her cause and villify its honest advocates, when her dawn of Revolution darkened into night again. He was the pugilist of the Pulpit, the gladiator of controversy, always itching for a fight, never so happy as when he set honest men to clutching each other by the throat. Secure in his worldly possessions, rich from the princely revenues derived from the poor—the hard working poor of his church,—a tyrant to the parish priests who were so unfortunate as to be subjected to his sway, by turns the Demagogue of Irish freedom and the *Mouchard* of Austrian despotism, he was a vain, bad, cunning, but *practical* man, this Atheist Prelate of the Roman Church.

"Now, what think you of our plans and our prospects?" said the Prelate, triumphantly—"can we not, using New York as the center of our operations, the Ballot Box, social dissension and sectarian warfare as the means, can we not, mould the New World to our views, and make it Rome, Rome, in every inch of its soil?"

The Legate responded quietly:

"I see but one obstacle—"

"Only one; that is well—"

"And that obstacle is not so much the memory of the American Past, which some of these foolish Americans still consider holy—not so much the memory of Penn the Quaker; Calvert the Catholic, who planted their silly dogma of Brotherly love on the Delaware and St. Mary's, in the early dawn of this country,—not so much the Declaration of Independence, nor the blood-marks which wrote its principles, on the soil from Bunker Hill to Savannah, from Brandywine to Yorktown,—not so much the history of the sixty-eight years, which in the American Republic, have shown a growth, an enterprise, a development never witnessed on God's

earth before,—not so much all this, as the single obstacle which I now lay on the table before you."

And from the breast of his coat he drew forth a small, thin volume, which he laid upon the table:

"This!" cried the Prelate, as though a bomb-shell had burst beneath his chair; "This! Why this is the four Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John!"

"Precisely. And Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, those simple fellows are the very ones whom we have most to fear."

"But I have driven this book from the Common Schools!" cried the Prelate, rather testily.

"Have you driven it from the home?" quietly asked the Legate.

The Prelate absently toyed with his cross, but did not answer.

"Can you drive it from the home?" asked the Legate.

The Prelate gazed at the portrait of Cardinal Dubois, and then at Richelieu's, but did not reply.

"Do you not see the difficulty?" continued the Legate, "so long as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, sit down by the firesides of the people, making themselves a part and parcel of the dearest memories of every household,—so long we may chop logic, weave plots, traffic in casuistry, but in vain!"

"True, that book is capable of much mischief," said the Prelate; "it has caused more revolutions than you could count in a year."

"In Spain, where this book is scarcely known, in Italy, where to read it is imprisonment and chains, we can get along well enough, but here, in the United States, where this book is a fireside book in every home, the first book that the child looks into, and the last that the dying old man listens to, as his ear is growing deaf with death,—here what shall we do? You know that it is a Democratic book?"

"Yes."

"That it is so simple in its enunciations of brotherly love, equality, and the love of God for all mankind, so simple and yet so strong, that it has required eighteen centuries of scholastic casuistry and whole tons of volumes, devoted to theological special pleading, to darken its simple meaning?"

"Yes, yes."

"That in its portraiture of Christ, there is something that stirs the hearts of the humblest, and sets them on fire with the thought, 'I too, am not a beast, but a child of God, destined to have a home here and an immortality hereafter?' That its profound contempt of riches and of mere worldly power,—its injunctions to the rich, 'sell all thou hast and give to the poor;' its pictures of Christ, coming from the workman's bench, and speaking, acting, doing and dying, so that the masses might no longer be the sport of priest or king, but the recreated men and women of a recreated social world; that in all this, it has caused more revolutions, given rise to more insurrections, levelled more deadly blows at absolute authority, than all other books that have been written since the world began?"

"Yes—y-e-s—y-e-s," said the Prelate. "True, true, a mischievous book. But how would you remedy the evil?"

"That's the question," said the Legate, dryly.

After a long pause they began to talk concerning the mission of San Luis in California—its fertile hills and valleys, rich in the olive, fig, grape, orange and pomegranate,—and of the *thousand acres of barren land*, claimed alike by the Jesuits and Dr. Martin Fulmer.

"The claim of the Fathers, to the mission-house and lands of San Luis, is established then?" said the Prelate.

"It has been acknowledged by the Mexican Government," was the reply of the Legate.

"And the claim to the thousand barren acres?"

"It rests in my hands," replied the Legate: "by a train of circumstances altogether natural, although to some they may appear singular, it is in my power to decide, whether these thousand barren acres shall belong to our Church or to Dr. Martin Fulmer."

"And it is not difficult to see which way your verdict will fall;" the Prelate's eyes sparkled and a smile lit up his harsh features.

"These acres are barren, barren so far as the fig, the orange, the vine, the pomegranate are concerned, barren even of the

slightest portion of shrubbery or verdure, but rich—"

"Rich in gold!" ejaculated the Prelate, folding his arms and fixing his eyes musingly upon the fire,—“gold sufficient to pave my way from this chair to the Papal throne;” he muttered to himself. “In Rome,” he said aloud, “I had an opportunity to examine the records of the various missions, established by our Church in California; and they all contain traditions of incredible stores of gold, hidden under the rocks and sands of California. Does your experience confirm those traditions?”

“I have traversed that land from the Sierra Nevada to the Pacific, and from North to South,” replied the Legate, “and it is my opinion, based on facts, that California is destined to exercise an influence upon the course of civilization and the fate of nations, such as has not been felt for a thousand years.”

He paused, as if collecting in his mind, in one focus, a panorama of the varied scenery, climate, productions, of the region between the snows of the Sierra Nevada and the Pacific. Then, while his pale face flushed with excitement, and his bright eyes grew even yet more vivid in their luster, he continued:

“The bowels of the land are rich in gold,” he said, in that low-toned but musical voice. “It is woven in the seams of her rocks. It impregnates her soil. It gleams in the sand of her rivers. Gold, gold, gold,—such as Banker never counted, nor the fancy of a Poet, ever dreamed of. Deep in her caverns the ore is shining; upon her mountain sides it flings back the rays of the sun; her forest trees are rooted in gold. Could you fathom her secrets, you would behold gold enough to set the world mad. Men would leave their homes, and all that makes life dear, and journey over land and sea, by hundreds of thousands, in pilgrimage to this golden land. The ships of the crusaders would whiten every sea, their caravans would belt every desert. The whole world, stirred into avaricious lust, would gravitate to this rock of gold.”

Turning to the Prelate, he said abruptly:

“Did you ever attempt to unravel the superstition of Gold?”

“The superstition of Gold?” echoed the Prelate.

“Yes, superstition of gold. For that widespread opinion in regard to the value of gold, is one of the most incredible superstitions that ever damned the soul of man. It obtains in all ages and on every shore. In the days of the Patriarchs, and in the days of the Bankers,—among the sleekly-attired people of civilized races, and among savage hordes, naked as the beasts,—everywhere and in all ages, this superstition has obtained, and crushed mankind, not with an iron, but with a golden rod. (There are exceptions, I grant, as in the case of the North American Indians, and other savage tribes, but it cannot be denied, that this superstition which fixes a certain value on gold, has overspread the earth, in all ages, as universal as the very air.) What religion has ruled so absolutely and reigned so long, as this deep-implanted golden superstition,—this Catholic religion of the yellow ore?”

“But gold is valuable in itself,” interrupted the Prelate—“it is something more than the representative of labor; in a thousand respects it surpasses all other metals. It is an article of merchandise, a part of commerce; even were it not money, it would always bring more money than any other metal.”

“This is often said, and is plausible. Admit all you assert, and the question occurs, ‘Why should it be so?’ When you say that gold is the most precious of all metals, an article of value in *itself*, as well as the representative of labor, you assert a fact, but you do not *explain* that fact. Far, far from it. But why should it be so? What *use* has it been to man, that it should receive this high distinction? Iron, lead, copper—all of these are a million fold more useful than gold—No—reflect a little while. Bend all your thought to the subject. Track the yellow ore through all ages, and at last, you must come to the conclusion, that the value placed upon gold is a superstition, as vast as it is wicked,—a superstition which has crushed more hearts and damned more souls, than all the (so called) *Religious* superstitions that smear the page of history with blood. That such a superstition exists, would alone convince me of the existence of an embodied

Devil, who, perpetually at war with God, does with a direct interference, derange his laws, and crush the hopes of his children."

For a moment, he shaded his eyes with his hand, while the Prelate gazed upon him, with something of surprise in his look.

"Can you estimate the evils which have flowed from this superstition? No. The reason falters, the imagination shudders: at the very thought you are bewildered,—dumb. But think of it as you will,—entangle yourself among the sophistries which attempt to explain, but in reality only darken it,—view it as a political economist, a banker, a merchant, or a worker in precious metals,—and you only plunge the deeper into the abyss of doubt and bewilderment. You cannot explain this superstition, unless you mount higher, and grasp that great law of God, which says, forever, '*It is wicked for ONE MAN to clothe himself with luxury, at the expense of the sweat and blood of another MAN, who is his Brother.*' Grasp this truth firmly; understand it in all its bearings,—and you discern the source of the Golden superstition; for it had its source, in that depraved idleness which seeks luxury at the expense of human suffering,—which coins enjoyment for a few men, on the immeasurable wretchedness of entire races of mankind. The first man who sought to rob his Brother of the fruits of his labor, and of his place on the earth, was doubtless the inventor of the golden superstition; for turn and twist it as you will, gold is only valuable because it *represents* labor. All its value springs from that cause. It represents labor already done, and it represents labor that is to be done, and therefore,—therefore only,—is it valuable. And it is the most convenient engine by which the idlers of the World can enslave the laborers—therefore it has always retained its value. Backed by the *delusion* which fixes upon it a certain value, and makes it more precious than the blood of hearts, or the salvation of the entire human race, gold will continue to be the great engine for the destruction of that race—for its moral and physical damnation—just as long as the few continue to live upon the wretchedness of the many. Once destroy this superstition,—take away from gold its certain value—make that value vague, uncertain, and subject to

as many changes as a bank note,—and you will have wrested the lash from the hand of the oppressor all over the world."

These words made a deep impression upon the Prelate, an impression which he dared not trust himself to frame in words. Suppressing an exclamation that started to his lips, he asked in a calm conversational tone—

"Will the discovery of the golden land have this effect?"

It was in a saddened tone, and with a downcast eye, that the Legate replied:

"Ah, that is, indeed, a fearful question. A question that may well make one shudder. One of two things must happen. From the rocks and sands of the golden land, the oppressors of the world will derive new means of oppression, or from those rocks and sands, will come the instrument, which is to lift up the masses and shake the oppressors to the dust. What shall be the result? Shall new and more damning chains, for human hearts, be forged upon the gold of these sands and rocks? Or, tottering among these rocks and sands, shall poor humanity at last discover the instrument of her redemption? God alone can tell."

The Prelate was silent. Folding his hands he surveyed the pallid visage of the Legate, with a look hard to define.

"The first wind that blows intelligence from this land of gold, will convulse the world. A few years hence, and these sands, now sparkling with ore, will be white with human skeletons. Thousands and hundreds of thousands will rush to seek the glittering ore, and find a grave, in the mud by the rivers' banks; hundreds of thousands will lie unburied in the depths of trackless deserts, or in the darkness of trackless ravines; the dog and the wolf will feed well upon human hearts."

Suppressing the emotion aroused, by a portion of the Legate's remarks, the Prelate asked:

"And the thousand barren acres contain incredible stores of gold?"

"Gold sufficient to affect the destiny of one-half the globe," replied the Legate: "gold, that employed in a good cause, would bless and elevate millions of the oppressed, or devoted to purposes of evil, might curse the dearest rights of half the human race."

"And it is in your power to establish the right of our Church to these lands?"

"It is. A word from me, and the thing is done."

"Pardon me," said the Prelate, slowly, and measuring every word,—*"some portions of your remarks excite my curiosity. You speak of the oppressed, and of the oppressors. Now,—now,—from any lips but yours, these words, and the manner in which you use them, would sound like the doctrines of the French Socialists. What do you precisely mean by 'oppressed,'—and who, in your estimation, are the 'oppressors?'"*

The Legate rose from his seat, and fixed his eyes upon the Prelate's face:

"There are many kinds of oppressors, but the most infamous, are those who use the Church of God, as the engine of their atrocious crimes."

This remark fell like a thunderbolt.

The Prelate slowly rose from his chair, his face flushed and his chest heaving.

"Sir!" he cried in a voice of thunder.

"Nay—you need not raise your voice,—much less confront me with that frowning brow. You know me and know the position which I hold. You know that I am above your reach,—that, perchance, a word from me, uttered in the proper place, might stop your career, even at the threshold. I know you, and know that you belong to the party, which, for ages, has made our church the instrument of the most infernal wrongs—"

"Sir!" again ejaculated the Prelate.

"A party, whose noblest monument is made of the skeletons, the racks and thumb-screws of the Inquisition, and whose history can only be clearly read, save by the torch-light of St. Bartholomew—"

"This from you, sir,—"

"A party whose avowed atheism produced the French Revolution, and whose cloaked atheism is even now sowing the seeds of social hell-fire, in this country and in Europe—"

"I swear, sir—"

"Hear me, sir, for I am only here to read you a plain lesson. You, and men like you, may possibly convert the Church once more into the instrument of ferocious absolutism and the engine of colossal murder, but remember—"

He flung his coat around him, and stood erect, his face even more deathly pale than usual, his eyes shining with clear and intense light. There was a grandeur in his attitude and look.

"Remember, even in the moments of your bloodiest triumphs, that even within the Church of Rome, swayed by such as you, there is another Church of Rome, composed of men, who, when the hour strikes, will sacrifice everything to the cause of humanity and God."

These words were pronounced slowly and deliberately, with an emphasis which drove the color from the Prelate's cheek.

"Think of it, within Rome, a higher, mightier Rome,—within the order of Jesuits, a higher and mightier order of Jesuits—and whenever you, and such as you, turn, you will be met by men, who have sworn to use the Church, as the instrument of human progress, or to drive forward the movement over its ruins."

He moved to the door, but lingered for a moment on the threshold:

"It is a great way," he said, "from the turnpike to the Vatican."

This he said, and disappeared. (The Prelate had risen from the position of breaker of stone on the public road, only to use all his efforts to crush and damn the masses from whom he sprung.)

And the Prelate was now left alone, to pick up the thunderbolt which had fallen at his feet.

Half an hour after this scene, the Legate once more ascended the steps of the Astor House, his cloak wound tightly about his slender form, his face,—and perchance the emotions written there,—cast into shadow by his broad sombrero. He was crossing the hall, flaring with gas-lights, when he was aroused from his reverie by these words,—

"My lord,—"

The speaker was a man of some forty-five years, with a hard, unmeaning face, and vague gray eyes. His ungainly form,—for he was round-shouldered, knock-kneed and clumsily footed,—was clad in black, varied only by a strip of dirty white about his bull-like neck. As he stood obsequiously, hat in hand, his bald crown, scantily encircled by a few hairs of no particular color, was revealed;

and also his low, broad forehead. He looked very much like an ecclesiastic, whom habits of passive obedience have converted into a human fossil.

"My lord, —"

"Pshaw, Michael, none of that nonsense here. Have you obeyed the directions which I gave you before I left the steamer to-night?"

"I have, my —" 'lord,' he was about to say, but he substituted 'your excellence!' — "Your country seat, near the city, is in good order. Everything has been prepared in anticipation of your arrival. I have just returned from it, — Maryvale, I think you call it?"

"Maryvale," replied the Legate, "Did you tell Felix to have my carriage ready for me, after midnight, at the place and the hour which I named?"

"Yes, my lord," — and Michael bowed low.

"No more of that nonsense, I repeat it. — This is not the country for it. How did you dispose of Cain?"

"I left Cain at the country seat."

"It is well," said the Legate, and having spoken further words to Michael, in a lower tone, he dismissed him, and went silently to his chamber.

And CAIN of whom they spoke. We shall see CAIN after a while.

CHAPTER VI.

"JOANNA."

At the hour of eleven o'clock, on the night of December 23d, 1844, — A gentleman of immense wealth, who occupied his own mansion, in the upper part of New York, came from his library, and descended the broad staircase, which led to the first floor of his mansion. His slight frame was wrapped in a traveling cloak and a gay traveling cap shaded his features. He held a carpet-bag in his hand. Arrived on the first floor, he entered a magnificent range of apartments communicating with each other by folding-doors, and lighted by an elegant chandelier. Around him, wherever he turned, was everything in the form of luxury, that the eye could desire or the power of wealth procure. Thick carpets, massive mir-

rors, lofty ceiling, walls broken here and there with a niche in which a marble statue was placed — these and other signs of wealth, met his gaze at every step.

He was a young man of fine personal appearance, and refined tastes. Without a profession, he employed his immense wealth in ministering to his taste for the arts. The only son of a man of fortune, educated to the habit of spending money without earning it, he had married about two years before, an exceedingly beautiful woman, the only daughter of a wealthy and aristocratic family.

And far back in a nook of this imposing suite of apartments, where the light of the chandelier is softened by the shadows of statue and marble pillar, sits this wife, a woman in the prime of early womanhood. — Her shape, at the same time tall, rounded, and commanding, is enveloped in a loose wrapper, which seems rather to float about her form, than to gird it closely. Her face is bathed in tears. As her husband approaches she rises and confronts him with a *blonde* countenance, fair blue eyes and golden hair. That face, beaming with young loveliness, is shadowed with grief.

"Must you go, indeed, my husband?" — and clad in that flowing robe, she rests her hands upon his shoulder, and looks tearfully into his face.

His cloak falls and discloses his slight and graceful form. He removes his traveling cap, and his wife may freely gaze upon that dark-complexioned face, whose regular features, remind you of an Apollo cast in bronze. His dark eyes flash with clear light as she raises one hand, and places it upon his forehead, and twines her fingers among the curls of his jet-black hair.

Take it all in all, it is an interesting picture, centered in that splendid room, where everything breathes luxury and wealth — the slender form of the young husband clad in black, contrasted with the imposing figure of the young wife, enveloped in drapery of flowing white.

"I must go, wife. Kiss me." — She bent back his head and gazing upon him long and earnestly, suffered her lips to join his, — "I'll be back before Christmas."

"You are sure that you must go?" she

exclaimed, toying with the curls of his dark hair.

"You saw the letter which I received from Boston. My poor brother lies at the point of death. I must see him, Joanna,—you know how it pains me to be absent from you, only for a day,—but I must go. I'll be back by Christmas morning."

"Will you, indeed, though, Eugene?"—she wound her arms about his neck—"You know how drearily the time passes without you. O, how I shall count the hours until you return!" And at every word she smoothed his forehead with her hand, and touched his mouth with those lips which bloomed with the ripeness and purity of perfect womanhood.

"I must go, Joanna,"—and convulsed at the thought of leaving this young wife, even for a day, the husband gathered her to his breast, and then seizing his cloak and carpet-bag, hurried from the room. His steps were heard in the hall without, and presently the sound of the closing door reached the ears of the young wife.

An expression of intense sorrow passed over her face, and she remained in the center of the room, her hand clasped over her noble bust, and her head bowed in an attitude of deep melancholy.

"He is gone," she murmured, and passing through the spacious apartment, she traversed the hall, and ascended the broad stairway.

At the head of the stairway was a large and roomy apartment, warmed (like every room in the mansion) from an invisible source, which gave a delightful temperature to the atmosphere. There was a small workstand in the midst of the apartment, on which stood a lighted candle. A servant maid was sleeping with her head upon the table, and one hand resting upon a cradle at her side. In that cradle, above the verge of a silken coverlet, appeared the face of a cherub boy, fast asleep, with a rose on his cheek, and ringlets of auburn hair, tangled about his forehead, white as alabaster.

This room the young mother entered, and treading on tiptoe, she approached the cradle and bent over it, until her lips touched the forehead of the sleeping boy. And when she rose again there was a tear upon

his cheek,—it had fallen from the blue eye of the mother.

Retiring noiselessly, she sought her own chamber, where a taper was dimly burning before a mirror. By that faint light you might trace the luxurious appointment of the place,—a white bed, half shadowed in an alcove—a vase of alabaster filled with fragrant flowers—and curtains falling like snow-flakes along the lofty windows. The idea of wifely purity was associated with every object in that chamber.

"I shall not want you to-night, Eliza; I will undress myself," exclaimed Joanna to a female servant, who stood waiting near the mirror. "You may retire."

The servant retired, and the young wife was alone. She extinguished the taper, and all was still throughout the mansion. But she did not retire to her bed. Advancing in the darkness, she opened a door behind the bed, and entered the bath-room, where she lighted a lamp by the aid of a perfumed match which she found, despite the gloom. The bath-room was oval in shape, with an arched ceiling. The walls, the ceiling and the floor were of white marble. In the center was the bath, resembling an immense shell, sunk into the marble floor. This place, without ornament or decoration of any kind, save the pure white of the walls and floor, was pervaded by luxurious warmth. The water which filled the shell or hollow in the center of the floor, emitted a faint but pungent perfume.

She disrobed herself and descended into the bath, suffering her golden hair to float freely about her shoulders.

After the lapse of a quarter of an hour, this beautiful woman took the light and passed into the bed chamber. She cast a glance toward her bed, which had been consecrated by her marriage, and by the birth of her first and only child. Then advancing toward a wardrobe of rosewood, which stood in a recess opposite the bed, she took from thence a dress, with which she proceeded to encase her form. A white robe, loose and flowing, with a hood resembling the cowl of a nun. This robe was of the softest satin. She enveloped her form in its folds, threw the hood over her head, and looking in the mirror, surveyed her beautiful face, which, glowing with warmth, was framed in her

golden hair, and in the folds of the satin cowl.

She drew slippers of delicate satin, white as her robe, upon her naked feet.

Then, taking from the wardrobe a heavy cloak, lined throughout with fur, as soft as the satin which clad her shape, she wound it about her from head to foot, and stood completely buried in its voluminous folds.

Once more she listened: all was still throughout that mansion, the home of aristocratic wealth. Thus clad in the silken robe and cowl, covered in its turn by the shapeless black cloak, this young wife, whose limbs were glowing with the warmth of the bath, whose person was invested with a delicate perfume, turned once more and gazed upon her marriage bed, and a deep sigh swelled her bosom. She next extinguished the light, and passing from the chamber, descended the marble staircase. All was dark. She entered the suite of apartments on the first floor, which, adorned with pillars, communicated with each other by folding-doors. The chandelier had been extinguished, and the scene was wrapt in impenetrable darkness.

Standing in the darkness,—her only apparel the silken robe, and the thick, warm cloak which covered it,—the young wife trembled like a leaf.

She attempted to utter a word, but her voice failed her.

"Joanna!" breathed a voice, speaking near her.

"Beverly!" answered the young wife, breathing the name in a whisper.

A faint sound like a step, whose echo is muffled by thick carpets, and the hand of a man, clasps the hand of Joanna.

"How long have you been here?" she whispered.

"I just entered," was the answer.

"How?"

"By the front door, and the key which you gave me."

"O, I tremble so,—I am afraid—"

An arm encircled the cloak which covered her, and girded it tightly about her form.

"Has he gone, Joanna?"

"Yes, Beverly,—half an hour ago."

"Come, then, let us go. The carriage is waiting at the next corner; and the street-lamp

near the front door is extinguished. All is dark without; no one can see us."

"Are you sure, Beverly—I tremble so."

"Come, Joanna," and through the thick darkness he led her toward the hall, supporting her form upon his arm.

"O, whither are you leading me," she whispered in a broken voice.

"Can you ask? Don't you remember my note of to-day. To the TEMPLE, Joanna."

Their steps echo faintly from the entry.

Then the faint sound produced by the careful closing of the street door is heard.

A pause of one or two minutes.

Hark! The rolling of carriage wheels.

All is still as death throughout the mansion and the street on which it fronts.

Hours pass away, and once more the street door is unclosed, and carefully closed again. A step echoes faintly through the hall,—very faintly,—and yet it can be heard distinctly, so profound is the stillness which reigns throughout the mansion. It ascends the marble staircase, and is presently heard crossing the threshold of the bed-chamber. A pause ensues, and the taper in front of the mirror is lighted again, and a faint ray steals through the chamber.

EUGENE LIVINGSTONE stands in front of the mirror. He flings his cloak on a chair, dashes his cap from his brow, and wipes the sweat from his forehead,—although he has just left the air of a winter night, his forehead is bathed in moisture. His slender frame shakes as with an ague-chill. His eyes are unnaturally dilated; the white of the eyeball may be plainly traced around the pupil of each eye. His lips are pressed together, and yet they quiver, as if with deathly cold.

He does not utter a single ejaculation.

A letter is in his right hand, neatly folded and scented with *pachouli*. It bears the name "Joanna," as a superscription. He opens it and reads its contents, traced in a delicate hand—

JOANNA—

To-night,—at Twelve.—THE TEMPLE.

BEVERLY.

Having read the brief letter, the husband draws another from a side-pocket: "There may be a mistake about the handwriting," he murmurs, "let us compare them."

The second letter is addressed to "EUGENE LIVINGSTONE, Esq.," and its contents, which the husband traces by the light of the taper, are as follows :

New York, Dec. 23, 1844.

DEAR EUGENE :—Sorry to hear that you have such sad news from Boston. Must you go to-night ? Send me word and I'll try to go with you. Thine, ever,

BEVERLY BARRON.

Long and intently, the husband compared these two letters. His countenance underwent many changes. But there could be no doubt of it—both letters were written by the same hand.

"He wrote to me early this morning, and to my wife about an hour afterward,—as soon as he received my answer." I found the letter to her upon the floor of this chamber, only two hours ago."

He replaced both letters in his vest pocket.

Then taking the taper, he bent his steps toward the room at the head of the marble staircase. The young nurse was fast asleep on the couch, near the cradle.

Eugene bent over the cradle. Resting its rosy cheek on its bent arm, the child was sleeping there, its auburn hair still tangled about its forehead. He could not help pressing his lips to that forehead, and a tear—the only tear that he shed—fell from his hot eye-ball, and sparkled like a pearl upon the baby's cheek.

Then Eugene returned to the bedchamber, and sat down beside the bed, still holding the taper in his grasp. The light fell softly over the unruffled coverlet.

"I remember the night when she first crossed yonder threshold, and slept in this bed."

There were traces of womanish weakness upon his bronzed face, but he banished them in a moment, and the expression of his eye and lip became fixed and resolute.

He sat for five minutes with his elbow on his knee, and his forehead in his hand.

Then rising, he opened his carpet-bag, and took from thence a black robe, with wide sleeves, and a cowl. It took but a moment to assume his robe, and draw the cowl over his dark locks. He caught a glance at his face, thus framed in the velvet cowl, and

started as he beheld the contrast between its ashy hues and the dark folds which concealed it.

"THE TEMPLE!" he muttered, and pressed his hand against his forehead,— "I believe I remember the pass word."

He took a pair of pistols, and a long slender dagger, sheathed in silver, from the carpet-bag, and regarded them for a moment.

"No, no," he exclaimed, "these will not avail for a night like this."

Gathering his cloak about him, he extinguished the taper, and crossed the threshold of his bed-chamber. His steps were heard on the stairs, and soon the faint jar of the shut door was heard.

And as he left the house, the child in the cradle awoke from its slumber and stretched forth its little head, and in its baby voice called the name of the young MOTHER.

Our story now turns to Randolph and Esther.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WHITE SLAVE AND HIS SISTER.

As the night set in—the night of December 23d, 1844—two persons were seated in the recess of a lofty window, which commanded a view of Broadway. It was the window of a drawing-room, on the second floor of a four storied edifice, built of brick, with doors and window-frames of marble.—By the dim light which prevailed, it might be seen that the drawing-room was spacious and elegantly furnished. Mirrors, pictures and statues broke softly through the twilight.

Seated amid the silken curtains of the window, these persons sat in silence—the man with his arms folded, and his head sunk upon his breast, the woman with her hands clasped over her bosom, and her eyes fixed upon the face of her companion. The woman was very beautiful; one of those who are called 'queenly' by persons who have never seen a live queen, and who are ignorant of the philosophical truth, that one beautiful woman is worth all the queens in the universe. The man was dark-haired, and of a complexion singularly pale and colorless; there was thought upon his forehead, and something of an unpleasant memory, written in his knit brows and compressed lips.

The silence which had prevailed for half an hour, was broken by a whisper from the lips of the woman—

"Of what are you thinking, Randolph?"

"Of the strange man whom we met at the house half way between New York and Philadelphia. His name and his personality are wrapt in impenetrable mystery."

"Had it not been for him—"

"Ay, had it not been for him, we should have been lost. You would have become the prey of the—the *master*, Esther, who owns you, and I,—I—well, no matter, I would have been dead."

"After the scene in *the house*, Randolph, he came on with us, and by his directions we took rooms at the City Hotel. From the moment of our arrival, only a few hours ago, we did not see him, until —"

"Until an hour ago. Then he came into our room at the hotel. 'Here is a key,' said he, 'and your home is No. —, Broadway. Go there at once, and await patiently the coming of the twenty-fifth of December.—You will find servants to wait upon you, you will find money to supply your wants,—it is in the drawer of the desk which you will discover in your bedroom—and most of all, you will there be safe from the attempts of your persecutor.' These were his words. We came at once, and find ourselves—the servants excepted—the sole tenants of this splendid mansion."

"But don't you remember his last words, as we left the hotel? 'At the hour of six,' said he, this singular unknown, 'you will be waited on by a much treasured friend.'—Who can it be that is to come and see us at that hour?"

"Friend," Randolph echoed bitterly, "what '*friend*' have we, save this personage, whose very name is unknown to us? Our father is dead. When I say that I say at once that we are utterly alone in the world."

"And yet there is a career before you, Randolph," faltered Esther.

"A splendid career, ha, ha, Esther, yes a splendid career for the White Slave! You forget, good girl, that we have negro blood in our veins. How much wealth do you think it would require to blot out the memory of the past? Suppose we are successful on the twenty-fifth of December,—suppose

the mysterious trustee of the Van Huyden estate recognizes us as the children of one of the Seven,—suppose that we receive a share of this immense wealth—well, Esther, what will it avail us? Wherever we turn, the whisper will ring in our ears, 'They have negro blood in their veins. Their mother was descended from the black race. True, they look whiter than the palest of the Caucasian race, but—but'—(do you hear it, Esther?) '*but they have negro blood in their veins.*'"

He started from his chair, and his sister saw, even by the dim light which came through the half-drawn window-curtains, that his chest heaved, and his face was distorted by a painful emotion.

She also arose.

"Randolph," she whispered, and laid her hand gently on his arm, "Randolph, my brother, I say it again, come wealth or poverty, you have a career before you. In Europe we may find a home,—"

"Europe!" he echoed, "And must we go to Europe, in order to be permitted to live? No, Esther, no! I am an American, yes,"—and his voice, low and deep, echoed proudly through the stillness of the dimly-lighted room,—yes, I am a Carolinian, ay, a South Carolinian; South Carolina is my home; while I live, I will not cease to assert my right to a place, ay, and no dishonorable place—on my native soil."

He passed his sister's arm through his own, and led her gently over the carpet, which, soft as down, returned no echo to their tread. The lofty ceiling stretched above them, in the vague twilight; and on either hand were the walls adorned with paintings and statues. The mirror, which but dimly reflected their forms, flashed gently through the gloom.

"And Esther, there is one reason why I will not become an exile, which I have never spoken to mortal ears—not even to yours, my sister. It was communicated to me by my father, before I left for Europe: he placed *proofs* in my possession which do not admit of denial. Sister, my epistle!—Here, in the dimly-lighted room, to which we have been guided by an unknown friend,—here, surrounded by mystery, and with the marks of wealth all about us,—here, as

the crisis of our fate draws near, let me breathe the secret in your ears."

He paused in the center of the room. His sister felt his arm tremble as he drew her to his side. His voice betrayed, in its earnest yet faltering tones, an unfathomable emotion. And Esther clinging to his side, and looking up into his face—which she could scarcely discern through the gloom—felt her bosom swell, and her breath come painfully in gasps, as she was made, involuntarily, a sharer of her brother's agitation.

"Randolph," she said, "what can be the secret, which you have kept ever from me, your sister?"

"I will not leave this country, in the first place, because I am of its soil," he answered, "and because, first and last, it is no common right, which binds me to my native land. Come, Esther, to the window, where the light will help my words; you shall know all—"

He led her to the window, and drew from beneath his vest, a miniature, which he held toward the fading light.

"Do you trace the features?" he whispered.

"I do. It is beautifully painted, and the likeness resembles a thousand others, that I have seen of the same man. But what has this portrait in miniature to do with us?"

"What has it to do with us? Regard it again, and closely, my sister. Do you not trace a resemblance?"

"Resemblance to whom?" Esther echoed. "Why it is the portrait of — —."

She repeated a name familiar to the civilized world.

"It is *his* portrait. No one can deny it. But Esther, again I ask you,—" his voice sunk low and lower.—"Do you not trace a resemblance?"

"Resemblance to whom?" she answered, her tone indicating bewildered amazement.

"To the picture of *OUR MOTHER*, which you have seen at Hill-Royal," was Randolph's answer.

Utterly bewildered, Esther once more examined the miniature; and an idea, so strange, so wild that she deemed it but the idle fancy of a dream, began to take shape in her brain.

"I am in the dark, I know not what you

mean. True, true, the face portrayed in miniature does, somewhat, resemble our mother's portrait, but—"

"That miniature, Esther, is the portrait of the Head of our Family. That man,—" again he pronounced the name,—"*was* the father of our mother. We are his grandchildren, my sister."

Esther suffered the miniature to fall from her hand. She sank back into a chair.

For a few moments, there was a death-like pause, unbroken by a single word.

"The grandchildren of — — !" echoed Esther, at length. "You cannot mean it, Randolph?"

"Randolph bent his head until his lips well-nigh touched his sister's ear. At the same moment he clasped her hard with a painful pressure. The words which he then uttered were uttered in a whisper, but every word penetrated the soul of the listener.

"Esther, we are the grandchildren of that man whose name is on the lips of the civilized world. Our mother was *his* child. *His* blood flows in our veins. We are of *his* race; *his* features may be traced in your countenance and in mine. Now let them cut and hack and maim us: let them lash us at the whipping-post, or sell us in the slave mart. At every blow of the lash, we can exclaim, 'Lash on! lash on! But remember, you are inflicting this torture upon no common slaves; for your whip at every blow is stained with the blood of — —. These slaves whom you lash are *HIS* grandchildren!"

He paused, overcome by the violence of his emotion. In a moment he resumed!

"And it is because I am *HIS* grandson, that I will not exile myself from this land, which was *HIS* birthplace as it is mine. Yes, I cannot exile myself, for the reason that my *GRANDFATHER* left to my hands the fulfillment of an awful trust—of a work which, well fulfilled, will secure the happiness of all the races who people the American continent. I may become a suicide, but an exile,—never!"

"But our mother, was the daughter of Colonel Rawden. So the rumor ran, and so you stated before the Court of Ten Millions."

"In that statement I simply followed the

popular rumor, for the time for the *entire truth* had not yet come. But our mother was not the child of Colonel Rawden. Her mother was indeed Rawden's slave, but not one drop of Rawden's blood flows in our veins. Colonel Rawden was aware of the truth; well he knew that *HEBODIA*, whom he sold to our father, was the child of ———.

There was a pause: and it was not broken until Esther spoke:

"You would not like to return to Europe, then?"

"For one reason, and one only, I would like to visit Europe."

"And that reason?"

"Know, Esther, that at Florence, in the course of a hurried tour through Italy, I met a gentleman named Bernard Lynn. His native country I never ascertained; he was near fifty years of age; gentlemanly in his exterior, of reputed wealth, and accompanied by an only daughter, Eleanor Lynn. At Florence,—it matters not how,—I saved his daughter's life—ay, more than life, her honor. All his existence was wrapt up in her; you may, therefore, imagine the extent of his gratitude to the young American who saved the life of this idolized child."

"Was the girl grateful, as well as the father?"

"I remained but a week in their company, and then separated, to see them no more forever. That week was sufficient to assure me that I loved her better than my life,—that my passion was returned; and could I but forget the negro blood which mingles in my veins, I might boldly claim her as my own. Her father had but one prominent hatred: mild and gentlemanly on all other subjects, he was ferocious at the sight or mention of a negro. He regarded the African race as a libel upon mankind; a link between the monkey and the man; a caricature of the human race; the work of Nature, in one of her *unlucky* moods. Conscious that there was negro blood in my veins, I left him abruptly. With this consciousness I could not press my suit for the hand of his daughter."

"But you would like to see her again?"

"Could I meet her as an equal, yes! But never can I look upon her face again. Don't

you see, Esther, how at every turn of life, I am met by the fatal whisper, 'There is *negro blood in your veins!*'"

"She was beautiful?"

"One of the fairest types of the Caucasian race, that ever eye beheld. Tall in stature, her form cast in a mould of enticing loveliness, her complexion like snow, yet blushing with roses on the lip and cheek; her hair, brown in the sunlight, and dark in the shade; her eyes of a shade between brown and black, and always full of the light of all-abounding youth and hope.—Yes, she was beautiful, transcendently beautiful! She had the intellect of an affectionate but proud and ambitious woman."

"You saved her life?"

"I saved her honor."

"Her honor?"

"So beautiful, so young, so gifted, she attracted the attention of an Italian nobleman, who sued in vain for her hand. Foiled in his efforts to obtain her in honorable marriage, he determined to possess her at all hazards. One night, as herself and her father were returning to Florence, after a visit to Valambrosa, the carriage was attacked by a band of armed ruffians. The father was stretched insensible, by a blow upon the temple, from the hilt of a sword. When he recovered his senses, he was alone, and faint with the loss of blood. His daughter had disappeared. He made out, at length, to get back to Florence, and instituted a search for his child. His efforts were fruitless. Suspicion rested upon the rejected lover, but he appeared before the father, and to the father's satisfaction established his innocence. At this period, when the father had relinquished all hope, I assumed the disguise of a traveling student, armed myself and departed from Florence. I bent my steps to the Appenines. A servant of the nobleman, impelled at once by a bribe, and by revenge for ill-treatment, had imparted certain intelligence to me; upon this information I shaped my course. In an obscure nook of the Appenines, separated from the main road by a wilderness frequented by banditti, I found the daughter of Bernard Lynn. She was a prisoner in a miserable inn, which was kept by a poor knave, in the pay of the robbers. I entered the room in

which she was imprisoned, in time to rescue her from the nobleman, who had reached the inn before me, and who was about to carry his threats into force. Had I been a moment later, her honor would have been sacrificed. A combat ensued: Eleanor saw me peril my life for her; and saw the villain laid insensible at her feet. She fainted in my arms. It matters not to tell how I bore her back to her father, who confessed that I had done a deed, which could never be suitably rewarded, although he might sacrifice his fortune and his life, in the effort to display his gratitude."

"By what name did they know you?"

"As Randolph Royaltan, the son of a gentleman of South Carolina. From this I am afraid the father built false impressions of my social position and my wealth. Afraid to tell Eleanor the truth, I left them without one word of farewell."

At this moment, a door was opened, and the light of a wax candle, held in the hand of a servant who occupied the doorway, flashed over the details of the drawing-room, lighting up the scene with a sudden splendor. The servant was a man of middle age and of a calm, sober look. He was clad in a suit of gray, faced with black velvet.

The light revealed the brother and sister as they stood in the center of the scene; Esther, clad in the green habit which fitted closely to her beautiful shape, and Randolph attired in a black coat, vest and cravat, which presented a strong contrast to his pallid visage.

The servant bowed formally upon the threshold, and advanced, holding a salver of silver in one hand and the candle in the other. As soon as he had traversed the space between Randolph and the door, he bowed again, and extended the salver, upon which appeared a card, inscribed with a name—

"Master, a gentleman desires to see you. He is in his carriage at the door. He gave me this card for you."

Randolph exchanged glances with Esther, as much as to say "our expected visitor," and then took the card, and read these words:

"An old friend desires to see Randolph Royaltan and his sister."

Randolph started as he beheld the handwriting, and the blood rushed to his cheek:

"Show the gentleman up stairs," he said quietly.

The servant disappeared, taking with him the light, and the room was wrapt in twilight once more.

"Have you any idea who is this visitor?" whispered Esther.

"Hush! Do not speak! Surrounded by mystery as we are, this new wonder throws all others completely into shade. I can scarcely believe it; and yet, it was *his* handwriting! I cannot be mistaken."

In vain did Esther ask, "Whose handwriting?" Trembling with anxiety and delight, Randolph listened intently for the sound of footsteps on the stairs.

Presently there came a sound, as of footsteps ascending a stairway, covered with thick carpet; and then the door opened and the servant stood on the threshold, light in hand:

"This way, sir, this way," he exclaimed and entered: while Randolph and Esther's gaze was centered on the doorway; the servant in gray rapidly lighted the wax candles, which stood on the marble mantle, and the spacious room was flooded with radiance.

"Ah, ha, my dear boy, have I caught you at last?" cried a harsh but a cheerful voice, and an elderly man, wrapped in a cloak, crossed the threshold, and approached Randolph with rapid steps.

"Mr. Lynn!" ejaculated Randolph, utterly astonished.

"Yes, your old friend, whom you so abruptly left at Florence, without so much as a word of good-bye! How are you, my dear fellow? Give me a shake of your hand. Miss Royaltan, I presume?"

By no means recovered from his bewilderment, Randolph managed to present Mr. Bernard Lynn to his sister, whom he called "Miss Esther Royaltan."

The visitor gave his hat and cloak to the servant, and flung himself into an arm-chair. He was a gentleman of some fifty years, dark complexion, and with masses of snow-white hair. His somewhat portly form was attired in a blue frock coat, beneath which the collar of a buff waistcoat and a black stock were discernible.

"Come, come, Randolph, my boy, let me chat with Miss Esther, while you attend to your servant, who, if I may judge by his telegraphic signs, has something to say to you in regard to your household affairs."

Randolph turned and was confronted by the servant, Mr. Hicks, who bowed low, and said in a tone which was audible through the room—

"At what hour will you have dinner served?" and then added in a whisper, "*I wish to speak with you alone.*"

"At seven, as I directed you, when I first arrived," replied Randolph, and followed the servant from the drawing-room.

Mr. Hicks led the way, down the broad staircase, to the spacious hall on the lower floor, which was now illuminated by a large globe lamp.

"Pardon me, Mr. Royalton," said Mr. Hicks, "for troubling you about the dinner hour. That, if you will excuse me for saying so, was only a pretext. Your Agent, who arrived before you, to-day, and engaged myself and the other domestics, gave me especial directions, to prepare dinner to-night, at seven precisely. It was not about the hour of dinner, therefore, that I wished to see you, for we all know our duty, and you may rely upon it, that all the *appointments* of this mansion, are in good hands."

"Right, Mr. Hicks, right, may I ask whether my Agent, who was here to-day, wore an odd dress which he sometimes wears, a—a—"

"A blue surtout, with a great many capes? Yes, sir. The fashion in the south, I presume."

"*It was then my unknown friend of the half-way-house,*" thought Randolph: presently, he said, "Why did you call me from the drawing-room?"

Mr. Hicks bowed his formal bow, and pointed to a door of dark mahogany:

"If you will have the kindness to enter that room, you will know why I called you."

And Mr. Hicks bowed again, and retreated slowly from the scene.

Placing his hand upon the door, Randolph felt his heart beat tumultuously against his breast.

"Yesterday, a hunted slave," the thought rushed over him, "and to-day, the master of

a mansion, and with a train of servants to obey my nod! Sol, my unknown friend in the surtout, with blue capes, was here to-day, acting the part of my 'Agent.' What new wonder awaits me, beyond this door?"

He opened the door, and he trembled, although he was anything but a coward. The room into which he entered, was about half as large as the drawing-room above. A lamp standing in the center of the carpet, shed a soft luxurious luster over the walls, which, white as snow, were adorned with one mirror, and three or four pictures, set in frames of black and gold. At a glance, in one of these frames, Randolph recognized the portrait of his father. The windows, opening on the street, were veiled with damask curtains. A piano stood in one corner, a sofa opposite, and elegant chairs of dark wood, were disposed around the room. It was at once a neat, singular, and somewhat luxurious apartment.

And on the sofa, was seated the figure of a woman, closely veiled. Her dark attire was in strong contrast with the scarlet cushions on which she rested, and the snow-white wall behind her.

Randolph stopped suddenly; he was stricken dumb, by a sensation of utter bewilderment. The unknown did not remove the veil from her face; she did not even move.

"You wish to see me, Madam?" he said, at length.

She drew the veil aside—he beheld her face,—and the next moment she had bounded from the sofa and was resting in his arms.

"Eleanor!" he cried, as the veil removed, he beheld her face.

"Randolph!" she exclaimed, as he pressed her to his breast.

CHAPTER VIII.

ELEANOR LYNN.

In a few moments they were seated side by side on the sofa, and while she spoke, in a low musical voice, Randolph devoured her with his eyes.

"We arrived from Europe, only the day before yesterday. Father determined to visit New York, on our way to Havana,

where we intend to spend the winter. And to-day, by a strange chance at our hotel, he encountered your Agent—the superintendent of your southern plantation,—an eccentric person, who wears an old-fashioned surtout, with I know not how many capes. From this gentleman, father learned that you had just arrived from the south, and at once determined to give you a surprise. We came together, but to tell you the truth, I wanted to see you alone, and, therefore, lingered behind, while father went up stairs to prepare you for my presence.”

She smiled, and Randolph, like a man in a delicious dream, feared to move or speak, lest the vision which he beheld might vanish into the air.

Words are but poor things, with which to paint a beautiful woman.

There was youth and health in every line of her face: her form, incased in a dark dress, which enveloped her bust and fitted around her neck, was moulded in the warm loveliness of womanhood, at once mature and virgin. Her bonnet thrown aside, her face was disclosed in full light. A brow, denoting by its outline, a bold, yet refined intellect; an eye, large, lustrous, and looking black by night; a lip that had as much of pride as of love in its expression—such were the prominent characteristics of her face.

“Why did you leave us so abruptly at Florence?” she exclaimed,—“Ah, I know the secret—”

“You know the secret?” echoed Randolph, his heart mounting to his throat.

“One of your friends in Florence—a young artist named Waters, betrayed you,” she said, and laid her gloved hand on his arm, a sunny smile playing over her noble countenance. “At least after your departure he told your secrets to father.”

Randolph started from the sofa, as though a chasm had opened at his feet.

“He betrayed me—he! And yet you do not scorn me?”

“Scorn you? Grave matter to create scorn! You have a quarrel with your father, and leave home on a run-a-way tour for Europe. There, in Europe,—we will say at Florence—you make friends, and run away from them, because you are afraid they will think less of you, when they are aware

that your father *may* disinherit you. Fie! Randolph, twas a sorry thing, for you to think so meanly of your friends!”

These words filled Randolph with overwhelming agony.

When she first spoke, he was assured that the *secret of his life*, was known to her. He was aghast at the thought, but at the same time, overjoyed to know, that the *taint* of his blood, was not regarded by Eleanor as a crime.

But her concluding words revealed the truth. She was not aware of the fact. She was utterly mistaken, as to his motive, for his abrupt departure from Florence. Instead of the real cause, she assigned one which was comparatively frivolous.

“Shall I tell her all?” the thought crossed his mind, as he gazed upon her, and he shuddered at the idea.

“And so you thought that our opinion of you, was measured by your wealth, or by your want of wealth? For shame Randolph! You are now the sole heir of your father, but were it otherwise, Randolph, our friendship for you would remain unchanged.”

“The sole heir of my father’s estate!” Randolph muttered to himself,—“I dare not, dare not, tell her the real truth.”

But the fascination of that woman’s loveliness was upon him. The sound of her voice vibrated through every fiber of his being. When he gazed into her eyes, he forgot the darkness of his destiny, the taint of his blood, the gloom of his heart, and the hopes and fears of his future. He lived in the present moment, in the smile, the voice, the glance of the woman who sat by him,—her presence was world, home, heaven to him—all else was blank nothingness.

“Don’t you think that I’m a very strange woman?” she said with a smile, and a look of undefinable fascination. “Remember, from my childhood, Randolph, I have been deprived of the care and counsel of a mother. Without country and without home, I have been hurried with my father from place to place, and seen much of the world, and may be learned to battle with it. I am not much of a ‘woman of society,’ Randolph. The artificial life led by woman in that conventional world, called the ‘fashionable,’ never had much charm for me. My books, my

pencil, the society of a friend, the excitement of a journey, the freedom to speak my thoughts without fear of the world's frown, —these, Randolph, suit me much better than the life of woman, as she appears in the fashionable world. And whenever I transgress the 'decorums' and 'proprieties,' you will be pleased to remember that I am but a sort of a wild woman — a very barbarian in the midst of a civilized world."

Randolph did not say that she was an angel, but he thought that she was very beautiful for a wild woman.

She rose.

"Come, let us join father," she said, — "and I am dying to see this sister of yours, friend Randolph."

Taking her bonnet in one hand, she left her cloak on the sofa, and led the way to the door. At a glance Randolph surveyed her tall and magnificent figure. As leaving him, silent and bewildered, on the sofa, she turned her face over her shoulder, and looked back upon him, Randolph muttered to himself the thought of his soul, in one word, "negro!" So much beauty, purity and truth before him, embodied in a woman's form, and between that woman and himself an eternal barrier! The blood of an accursed race in his veins, the mark of bondage stamped upon the inmost fiber of his existence — it was a bitter thought. "You are absent, Randolph," she said, and came back to him, "shall I guess your thoughts?" She laid her hand upon his shoulder, and bent down until he felt her breath upon his forehead.

"You are thinking of the *night in the Apennines*?" she whispered. Randolph uttered an incoherent cry of rapture, and reached forth his arms, and drew her to his breast. — Their lips met — "You have not forgotten it?" he whispered.

She drew back her head as she was girdled by his arms, in order to gaze more freely upon his face. Blushing from the throat to the forehead, not with shame, but with a passion as warm and as pure as ever lighted a woman's bosom, she answered in a whisper:

"Randolph, I love you!"

"Love me! Ah, my God, could I but hope," he gasped.

She laid her hand upon his mouth.

"Hush, I am my father's child. We happen to think alike on subjects of importance. If you have not changed since the night in the Apennines, why — why, then Randolph, you will find that I am the same. As for my father, he always loved you."

When a woman like Eleanor Lynn gives herself away, thus freely and without reserve, you may be sure that the passion which she cherishes is not of an hour, a day, or a year, but of a lifetime.

Randolph could not reply in coherent words. There was a wild ejaculation, a frenzied embrace, a kiss which joined together these souls, burning with the fire of a first and stainless love, but there was no reply in words.

And all the while, behind the form of Eleanor, Randolph saw a phantom shape, which stood between him and his dearest hope. A hideous phantom, which said, "Thou art young, and thy face is pale as the palest of the race who are born to rule, but the blood of the negro is in thy veins."

At length Randolph rose, and taking her by the hand, led her from the room.

"You will see my sister, and love her," said Randolph, as he crossed the threshold. A hand was laid gently on his arm, and turning he beheld Mr. Hicks, who slipped a letter in his hand, whispering, —

"Pardon me, sir. This was left half an hour ago."

Randolph had no time to read a letter at that moment, so placing it in his coat pocket, he led Eleanor up-stairs. They entered the drawing-room, and were received by her father with a laugh, and the exclamation, —

"So, my boy, you have found this wild girl of mine a *second* time! Confess that we have given you one of the oddest surprises you ever encountered!"

Presently Esther and Eleanor stood face to face, and took each other by the hand. — Both noble-looking women, of contrasted types of loveliness, they stood before the father and Randolph, who gazed upon them with a look of silent admiration.

"So, you are Esther!" whispered the daughter of Bernard Lynn.

"And you are Eleanor!" returned the sister of Randolph.

"We shall love each other very much," said Eleanor, — "Come, let us talk a little."

They went hand in hand to a recess near the window, and sat down together, leaving Randolph and Mr. Lynn alone, near the center of the drawing-room.

"Do you know, my boy, that I have a notion to make your house our home, while we remain in New York? I hate the noise of a hotel, and so using a traveler's privilege, of bluntness, I'll invite myself and Eleanor to be your guests. I have letters to the 'first people' of the city, but these 'first people,' as they are called, are pretty much the same everywhere—cut out of the same piece of cloth, all over the world—they tire one dreadfully. If you have no objection, my friend, we'll stay with you for a few days at least.

Of course, Randolph replied to Mr. Lynn in the warmest and most courteous manner, concluding with the words, "Esther and myself will be too happy to have you for our guests. Make our house your home while you remain in New York, and—" he was about to add "forever!"

Mr. Lynn took him warmly by the hand. "And in a few days, he *must* learn that I am not the legitimate son of my father, but his *slave*," the thought crossed him as he shook the hand of Eleanor's father. "This Aladdin's palace will crumble into ashes, and this gentleman who now respects me, will turn away in derision from Randolph, the slave."

It was a horrible thought.

At this moment Mr. Hicks entered, and announced that dinner was ready. They left the room, Randolph with Eleanor on his arm, and Mr. Lynn with Esther, and bent their steps toward the dining-room. On the threshold Mr. Hicks slipped a letter in the hand of Esther, "It was left for you, Miss, half an hour ago," he said, and made one of his mechanical bows. Esther took the letter and placed it in her bosom, and Mr. Hicks threw open the door of the dining-room.

Randolph could scarce repress an ejaculation of wonder, as (for the first time) he beheld this apartment.

It was a spacious room, oval in shape, and with a lofty ceiling, which was slightly arched. The walls were covered with pale lilac hangings, and fine statues of white marble stood at equal distances around the

place. In the center stood the table, loaded with viands, and adorned with an alabaster vase, filled with freshly-gathered flowers.—Wax candles shed a mild light over the scene, and the air was imbued at once with a pleasant warmth and with the breath of flowers. The service of plate which loaded the table was of massive gold. Everything breathed luxury and wealth.

"You planters know how to live!" whispered Bernard Lynn: "By George, friend Randolph, you are something of a republican, but it is after the Roman school!"

In accordance with Randolph's request, Mr. Lynn took the head of the table, with Esther and Eleanor on either hand. Randolph took his seat opposite the father of Eleanor, and gazed around with a look of vague astonishment. A servant clad in gray livery, fringed with black velvet, stood behind each chair, and Mr. Hicks, the imperturbable, retired somewhat in the background, presided in silence over the progress of the banquet.

"We are not exactly dressed for dinner," laughed Mr. Lynn,—“but you will excuse our breach of that most solemn code, pro-founder than Blackstone or Vattel, and called *Etiquette*.”

Randolph gazed first at his dark hair, which betrayed some of the traces of hazel, and at the costume of Esther, which although it displayed her form to the best advantage, was not precisely suited for the dinner-table.

"Ah, we southrons care little for etiquette," he replied,—“only to-day arrived from the south, Esther and I have had little time to attend to the niceties of costume. By-the-by, friend Lynn, yourself and daughter are in the same predicament.” And then he muttered to himself, “Still the dress is better than the costume of a negro slave.”

The dinner passed pleasantly, with but little conversation, and that of a light and chatty character. The servants, stationed behind each chair, obeyed the wishes of the guests before they were framed in words; and Mr. Hicks in the background, managed their movements by signs, somewhat after the fashion of an orchestra leader. It was near eight o'clock when Esther and Eleanor retired, leaving Randolph and Mr. Lynn alone at the table.

"Dismiss these folks," said Bernard Lynn, pointing toward Mr. Hicks and the other servants, "and let us have a chat together."

At a sign from Randolph, Mr. Hicks and the servants left the room.

"Draw your chair near me,—there,—let us look into each other's faces. By George! friend Randolph, your wine cellar must be worthy of a prince or a bishop! I have just sipped your Tokay, and tasted your Champagne,—both are superb. But as I am a traveler, I drink brandy. So pass the bottle."

As Mr. Lynn, seated at his ease, filled a capacious goblet with brandy from a bottle labeled "1796," Randolph surveyed attentively his face and form.

CHAPTER IX.

BERNARD LYNN.

BERNARD LYNN was a tall and muscular man, somewhat inclined to corpulence. His dark complexion was contrasted with the masses of snow-white hair, which surrounded his forehead, and the eyebrows, also white, which gave additional luster to his dark eyes. His features were regular, and there were deep furrows upon his forehead and around his mouth. Despite the good-humored smile which played about his lips, and the cheerful light which flowed from his eyes, there was at times, a haggard look upon his face. One moment all cheerfulness and animation, the next instant his face would wear a faded look; the corners of his mouth would fall; and his eye become vacant and lusterless.

He emptied the goblet of brandy without once taking it from his lips, and the effect was directly seen in his glowing countenance and sparkling eyes.

"Ah! that is good brandy," he cried, smacking his lips, and sinking back in his chair. "You think I am a deep drinker?" he remarked, after a moment's pause.—"Do not wonder at it. There are times in a man's life when he is forced to choose between the brandy bottle and the knife of the suicide."

At the word, his head sunk and his countenance became clouded and sullen.

Before Randolph could reply, he raised his head and exclaimed gayly:

"Do you know, my boy, that I have been

a great traveler? Three times I have encircled the globe. I have seen most of what is to be seen under the canopy of heaven. I have been near freezing to death in Greenland, and have been burned almost to a cinder by the broiling sun of India. To-day, in the saloons of Paris; a month after in the midst of an Arabian desert; and the third month, a wanderer among the ruins of ancient Mexico and Yucatan. I have tried all climates, lived with all sorts of people, and seen sights that would make the Arabian Nights seem but poor and tame by contrast. And now, my boy, I'm tired."

And the wan, haggard look came over his face, as he uttered the word "*tired*."

"Your daughter has not accompanied you in these pilgrimages?"

"No. From childhood she was left under careful guardianship, in the bosom of an English family, who lived in Florence. Poor child! I have often wondered what she has thought of me! To-day I have been with her in Florence, and within two months she has received a letter from me, from the opposite side of the globe. But as I said before, I am *tired*. Were it not for one thing I would like to settle down in your country. A fine country,—a glorious country,—only one fault, and that very likely will eat you all up."

"Before I ask the nature of the fault, pardon me for an impertinent question. Of what country are you? You speak of the English as a foreign people; of the Americans in the same manner; yet you speak the language without the slightest accent."

The countenance of Mr. Lynn became clouded and sullen.

"I am of no country," he said harshly. "I ceased to have a country, about the time Eleanor was born. But another time," his tone became milder, "I may tell you all about it."

"And the fault of our country?" said Randolph, anxious to divert the thoughts of his friend from some painful memory, which evidently absorbed his mind, "what is it?"

Mr. Lynn once more filled and slowly drained his goblet.

"You are the last person to whom I may speak of this fault,—"

"How so?"

"You are a planter. You have been reared under peculiar influences. Your mind from childhood has been imperceptibly moulded into a certain form, and that form it is impossible to change. You cannot see, as I can; for I am a spectator, and you are in the center of the conflagration, which I observe from a distance. No, no, Randolph, I can't speak of it to you. But you planters will be awakened some day—you will. God help you in your awakening—hem!"

Randolph's face became pale as death.

"You speak, my friend, of the question of negro slavery. You surely don't consider it an evil. You—you—*hate* the very mention of the race."

Shading his eyes with his uplifted hand, Bernard Lynn said, with slow and measured distinctness:

"Do I hate the race? Yes, if you could read my heart, you would find hatred to the African race written on its every fiber. The very name of negro fills me with loathing." He uttered an oath, and continued in a lower tone: "By what horrible fatality was that accursed race ever planted upon the soil of the New World!"

Randolph felt his blood boil in his veins; his face was flushed; he breathed in gasps.

"And then it is not sympathy for the negro, that makes you look with aversion upon the institution of American slavery?"

"Sympathy for a libel upon the race—a hybrid composed of the monkey and the man? The idea is laughable. Were the negro in Africa—his own country—I might tolerate him. But his presence in any shape, as a dweller among people of the white race, is a curse to that race, more horrible than the plagues of Egypt or the fires of Gomorrah."

"It is, then, the *influence of negro slavery upon the white race*, which concerns you?" faltered Randolph.

"It is the *influence of negro slavery upon the white race* which concerns me," echoed Lynn, with bitter emphasis: "But you are a planter. I cannot talk to you. To mention the subject to one of you, is to set you in a blaze. By George! how the devils must laugh when they see us poor mortals, so eager in the pursuit of our own ruin,—so

merry as we play with hot coals in the midst of a powder magazine!"

"You may speak to me upon this subject," said Randolph, drawing a long breath, "and speak freely."

"It won't do. You are all blind. There, for instance, is the greatest man among you; his picture hangs at your back—"

Randolph turned and beheld, for the first time, a portrait which hung against the wall behind. It was a sad, stern face, with snow-white hair, and a look of intellect, moulded by an iron Destiny. It was the likeness of JOHN C. CALHOUN,—Calhoun, the John Calvin of Political Economy.

"I knew him when he was a young man," continued Lynn, "I have met and conversed with him. Mind, I do not say that we were *intimate friends*! A braver man, a truer heart, a finer intellect, never lived beneath the sun. *Then* he felt the evils of this horrible system, and felt that the only remedy, was the removal of the entire race to Africa. Yes, he felt that the black man could only exist beside the white, to the utter degradation of the latter. *Now*, ha! ha! he has grown into the belief, that Slavery,—in other words, *the presence of the black race in the midst of the white*,—is a blessing. To that belief he surrenders everything, intellect, heart, soul, the hope of power, and the approbation of posterity. When Calhoun is blind, how can you planters be expected to see?"

Randolph was silent. "There is in my veins, the blood of this accused race," he muttered to himself.

"In order to look up some of the results of this system," continued Bernard Lynn. "let us look at some of the characteristics of the American people. The north is a trader; it traffics; it buys; it sells; it meets every question with the words, '*Will it pay?*' (As a gallant southron once said to me; 'When the north choose a patron saint, a new name will be added to the calendar, '*SAINT PICAYUNE*'"). The South is frank, generous, hospitable; there are the virtues of ideal chivalry among the southern people. And yet, the north prospers in every sense, while the south,—*what is the future of the South?* The west, noble, generous, and free from the traits which mark a nation of mere

traffickers, is just what the south would be, were it FREE FROM THE BLACK RACE. Think of that, friend Randolph! You may glean a bit of solid truth from the disconnected remarks of an old traveler."

"But you have not yet, instanced a single evil of our institution," interrupted Randolph.

"Are you from the south, and yet, ask me to give you instances of the evils of slavery? Pshaw! I tell you man, the evil of slavery consists in the presence of the black race in the midst of the whites. That is the sum of the matter. You cannot elevate that race save at the expense of the whites—not the expense of money, mark you,—but at the expense of the physical and mental features of the white race. Don't I speak plain enough? The two races cannot live together and *not* mingle. You know it to be impossible. And do you pretend to say, that the mixture of black and white, can produce anything but an accursed progeny, destitute of the good qualities of each race, and by their very origin, at war with both African and Caucasian? Nay, you need not hold your head in your hands. It is blunt truth, but it is truth."

The bolt had struck home. Randolph had buried his face in his hands,—“I am one of these hybrids,” he muttered in agony; “at war at the same time, with the race of my father and my mother.”

“But, how would you remedy this evil?” he asked, without raising his head.

“Remove the whole race to Africa,” responded Lynn.

“How can this be done?”

“By one effort of southern will. Instead of attempting to defend the system, let the southern people resolve at once, that the *presence of the black race*, is the greatest curse that can befall America. This resolution made, the means will soon follow. One-fourth the expenses of a five years' war would transport the negroes to Africa. One-twentieth part of the sum, which will be expended in the next ten years (I say nothing of the past) in the quarrel of north and south, about this matter, would do the work and do it well. And then, *free from the black race*, the south would go to work and mount to her destiny.”

“But, what will become of the race, when they are transported to Africa?”

“If they are really of the human family, they will show it, by the civilization of Africa. They will establish a Nationality for the Negro, and plant the arts on sea-shore and desert. Apart from the white race, they can rise into their destiny.”

“And if nothing is done?” interrupted Randolph.

“If the south continues to defend, and the north to quarrel about slavery,—if instead of making one earnest effort to do something with the evil, they break down national good-feeling, and waste millions of money in mutual threats,—why, in that case, it needs no prophet to foretell the future of the south. That future will realize one of two conditions—”

He paused, and after a moment, repeated with singular emphasis, “*St. Domingo!—St. Domingo!*”

“And the other condition,” said Randolph.

“The whole race will be stript of all its noble qualities, and swallowed up in a race, composed of black and white, and cursing the very earth they tread. In the south, the white race will in time be *annihilated*. That garden of the world, composed, I know not of how many states,—extending from the middle states to the gulf, and from the Atlantic to the Mississippi,—will repeat on a colossal scale, the horrible farce, which the world has seen, in the case of *St. Domingo*.”

Bernard Lynn again filled his goblet, and slowly sipped the brandy, while the fire faded from his eyes, the corners of his mouth fell,—his face became faded and haggard again.

Randolph, seated near him, his elbow on his knee, and his forehead supported by his hand, was buried in thought. His face was averted from the light: the varied emotions which convulsed it in every lineament, were concealed from the observation of Bernard Lynn.

Thus they remained for a long time, each buried in his own peculiar thoughts.

“Randolph,” said Bernard Lynn,—and there was something so changed and singular in his tone, that Randolph started—“draw near to me. I wish to speak with you.”

Randolph looked up, and was astonished

by the change which had passed over the face of the traveler. His eyes flashed wildly, his features were one moment fixed and rigid and the next, tremulous and quivering with strong emotion; the veins were swollen on his broad forehead.

"Randolph," he said, in a low, agitated voice, "I am a Carolinian."

"A Carolinian?" echoed Randolph.

"The name of Bernard Lynn is not my real name. It is an assumed name, Randolph. Assumed, do you hear me?" his eyes flashed more wildly, and he seized Randolph's hand, and unconsciously wrung it with an almost frenzied clutch—"Assumed some seventeen years ago, when I forsook my home, my native soil, and became a miserable wanderer on the face of the earth. Do you know why I assumed that name,—do you know?"

He paused as if suffocated by his emotions. After a moment he resumed in a lower, deeper voice,—

"Did you ever hear the name of — —?"

"It is the name of one of the first and oldest families of Carolina," responded Randolph. "A name renowned in her history, but now extinct, I believe."

"That is my name, my real name, which I have forsaken forever, for the one which I now bear," resumed Bernard Lynn. "I am the last male representative of the family. Seventeen years ago my name disappeared from Carolina. I left home—my native land—all the associations that make life dear, and became a miserable exile. And why?"

He uttered an oath, which came sharp and hissing through his clenched teeth.

Profoundly interested, Randolph, as if fascinated, gazed silently into the flashing eyes of Bernard Lynn.

"I was young,—rich,—the inheritor of an honored name," continued Bernard Lynn, in hurried tones,—and I was married, Randolph, married to a woman of whom Eleanor is the living picture,—a woman as noble in soul, and beautiful in form as ever trod God's earth. One year after our marriage, when Eleanor was a babe,—nearer to me, Randolph,—I left my plantation in the evening, and went on a short visit to Charleston. I came home the next day, and where I had

left my wife living and beautiful, I found only a mangled and dishonored corpse."

His head fell upon his breast,—he could not proceed.

"This is too horrible!" ejaculated Randolph,—"too horrible to be real."

Bernard raised his head, and clutching Randolph's hands—

"The sun was setting, and his beams shone warmly through the western windows as I entered the bedchamber. Oh! I can see it yet,—I can see it now,—the babe sleeping on the bed, while the mother is stretched upon the floor, lifeless and weltering in her blood. Murdered and dishonored—murdered and dishonored—"

As though those words, "murdered and dishonored," had choked his utterance, he paused, and uttered a groan, and once more his head fell on his breast.

At this moment, even as Randolph, absorbed by the revelation, sits silent and pale, gazing upon the bended head of the old man,—at this moment look yonder, and behold the form of a woman, who with finger on her lip, stands motionless near the threshold.

Randolph is not aware of her presence—the old man cannot see her, for there is agony like death in his heart, and his head is bowed upon his breast; but there she stands, motionless as though stricken into stone, by the broken words which she has heard.

It is Eleanor Lynn.

On the very threshold she was arrested by the deep tones of her father's voice,—she listened,—and for the first time heard the story of her mother's death.

And now, stepping backward, her eye riveted on her father's form, she seeks to leave the room unobserved,—she reaches the threshold, when her father's voice is heard once more:—

"Ask me not for details, ask me not," he cried in broken tones, as once more he raised his convulsed countenance to the light. "The author of this outrage was not a man, but a negro,—a demon in a demon's shape; and"—he smiled, but there was no merriment in his smile,—and now you know why I left home, native land, all the associations which make life dear, seventeen years

ago. Now you know why I hate the accursed race."

As he spoke, Eleanor Lynn glided from the room.

CHAPTER X.

"YES, YOU WILL MEET HIM."

As midnight drew near, Randolph was alone in his bedchamber,—a spacious chamber, magnificently furnished, and illumined by a single candle, which stood upon a rose-wood table near the lofty bed. Seated in a chair, with his cloak thrown over his shoulders, and an opened letter in his hand, Randolph's eyes were glassy with profound thought. His face was very pale; a slight trembling of the lip, an occasional heaving of the chest, alone made him appear less motionless than a statue.

The letter which he held was the one which Mr. Hicks had given him, some three hours before, but he did not seem to be occupied with its contents.

"It looks like a bridal chamber," he muttered, as his eye roved round the spacious apartment, "and this white couch like a bridal bed,"—a bitter smile crossed his face. "Think of it—the bridal bed of Eleanor Lynn and—the white slave!"

And he relapsed into his reverie; or rather, into a train of thought, which had occupied him for two hours at least, while he sat silent and motionless in his chamber.

Oh, dark and bitter thoughts—filling every vein with fire, and swelling every avenue of the brain with the hot pulsations of madness! The image of Eleanor, the story told two hours ago by Bernard Lynn, and the taint that corrupted the life-blood in his veins,—all these mingled in his thoughts, and almost drove him mad.

"And from this labyrinth, what way of escape? Will Eleanor be mine, when she learns that I am of the accursed race of the wretch who first dishonored and then outraged her mother? And the father,—ah!"

He passed his hand over his brow, as if to banish these thoughts, and then perused the letter which he held in his hand,—

"It is signed by my 'unknown friend of the half-way-house,' and desires me, for

certain reasons, to be at a particular locality, in the Five Points, at ten minutes past twelve. It is now,"—he took his gold watch from his pocket,—"half past eleven. I must be moving. A singular request, and a mysterious letter; but I will obey."

On the table lay a leather belt, in which were inserted two bowie-knives and a revolving pistol. Randolph wound it about his waist, and then drew a cap over his brow, and gathered his cloak more closely to his form.

He next extinguished the candle, and stole softly from the room. As he descended the stairway, all was still throughout the mansion. The servants had retired, and Eleanor, Esther, and the old man, no doubt, were sound asleep. Randolph passed along the hall, and opening the front door, crossed its threshold.

"Now for the adventure," he ejaculated, and hurried down Broadway. After nearly half an hour's walk, he turned into one of those streets which lead from the light and uproar of Broadway, toward the region of the Tombs.

Darkness was upon the narrow street, and his footsteps alone broke the dead stillness, as he hurried along.

As he reached a solitary lamp, which gave light to a portion of the street, his ear caught the echo of footsteps behind; and, impelled by an impulse which he could not himself comprehend, Randolph paused, and concealed his form in the shadow of a deep doorway. From where he stood, by the light of the lamp, (which was not five paces distant,) he could command a view of any wayfarer who might chance to pass along the deserted street.

The footsteps drew nearer, and presently two persons came in sight. They halted beneath the lamp. Randolph could not see their faces, but he remarked that one was short and thick-set in form, while the other was tall and commanding. The tall one wore a cloak, and the other an overcoat.

And Randolph heard their voices—

"Are we near the hound? My back hurts like the devil, and I don't wish to go any farther than is necessary."

"Only a block or two, to go," replied the other. "Judas Iscariot! Just think that

we're sure to find *him* there, Royalton, and your back wont hurt a bit."

"Oh, by ——! let me but find *him*, and stand face to face with *him*, and I'll take care of the rest."

These words, accompanied by an oath, and uttered with the emphasis of a mortal hatred, were all that Randolph heard.

The twain proceeded on their way.

It was not until the sound of their footsteps had died away, that Randolph emerged from his hiding-place—

"Yes, you will meet *him*, and stand face to face with *him*, and—the rest is yet to be known."

He felt for his knives and pistols,—they were safe in the belt about his waist; and then, conscious that the crisis of his fate was near at hand, he silently pursued his way.

Return for a moment to the house in Broadway.

Esther is there, alone in her chamber, standing before a mirror, with a light in her hand. The mirror reaches from the ceiling to the floor; and never did mirror image forth before, a face and form so perfectly beautiful.

She has changed her attire. The green habit no longer incloses her form. A dress or robe of spotless white, leaves her neck and shoulders bare, rests in easy folds upon her proud bust, and is girdled gently to her waist by a sash of bright scarlet. The sleeves are wide, the folds loose and flowing, and the sleeves and the hem of the skirt are bordered by a line of crimson. The only ornament which she wears is not a diamond, brooch or bracelet, not even a ring upon her delicate hand, but a single lily, freshly gathered, which gleams pure and white from the blackness of her hair.

And what need she of ornament? A very beautiful woman, with a noble form; a voluptuous bust; a face pale as marble, ripening into vivid bloom on the lip and cheek, relieved by jet-black hair, and illumined by eyes that, flashing from their deep fringes, burn with wild, with maddening light. A very beautiful woman, who, as she surveys herself in the mirror, knows that she is beautiful, and feels her pulse swell, her bosom heave slowly into light, her blood bound with the fullness of life in every vein.

One hand holds the light above her dark hair—the other the letter which, three hours and more ago, she received from Mr. Hicks.

"It requested me to attire myself in the dress which I would find in my chamber, the costume of Lucretia Borgia. And I have obeyed. And then to enter the carriage, which at a quarter past twelve, will await me at the next corner, and bear me to the Temple. I will obey."

She smiled—a smile that disclosed the ivory of her teeth, the ripeness of her lips—lit up her eyes with new light, and was responded to by the swell of her proud bosom.

Take care Esther! You wear the dress of Lucretia Borgia, and you are even more madly beautiful than that accursed child of the Demon-Pope; but have a care. You are yet spotless and pure. But the blood is warm in your veins, and perchance there is ambition as well as passion in the fire which burns in your eyes. Have a care! The future is yet to come, Esther, and who can tell what it will bring forth for you?

"I will meet Godlike there," she said, and an inexplicable smile animated her face.

She placed a small poniard in the folds of her sash, and threw a heavy cloak, to which was attached a hood, over her form. She drew the hood over her face, and stood ready to depart.

The light was extinguished. She glided from the room, and down the stairs, and passed unobserved from the silent house. At the corner of the next street the carriage waited with the driver on the box.

"Who are you?" she said in a low voice.

"The Temple," answered the driver, and descended from the box, and opened the carriage door.

Esther entered, the door was closed, the carriage whirled away.

"What will be the result of the adventures of this night?" she thought, and her bosom heaved with mad agitation.

And as she was thus borne to the Temple, there was a woman watching by the bedside of an old man, in one of the chambers of the Broadway mansion, — Eleanor watching while her father slept.

Her night-dress hung in loose folds about her noble form, as she arose and held the dim

light nearer to his gray hairs. There was agony stamped upon his face, even as he slept—an agony which was reflected in the pallid face and tremulous lips of his daughter.

"He sleeps!" she exclaimed in a low voice: "Little does he fancy that I know the fearful history which this night fell from his lips. And this night, before he retired to rest, he clasped me to his bosom, and said—" she blushed in neck and cheek and brow,— "that it was the dearest wish of his heart, that I should be united to Randolph."

She kissed him gently on the brow, and crept noiselessly to her own room, and soon was asleep, the image of Randolph prominent in her dreams.

Poor Eleanor!

Leaving Randolph, his sister, and those connected with their fate, our history now turns to other characters.

Let us enter the house of the merchant prince.

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE HOUSE OF THE MERCHANT PRINCE.

It was near eleven o'clock, on the night of December 23d, 1844, when Evelyn Somers, Sen., sitting in his library by the light of the shaded candle, was startled by the ringing of the bell.

"The front door-bell!" he ejaculated, looking up from his labors, until the candle shone full upon his thin features and low forehead. "Can it be Evelyn? Oh! I forgot. He returned only this evening. One of the servants, I suppose—been out late—must look to this in the morning."

He resumed his pen, and again, surrounded by title-deeds and mortgages, bent down to his labors.

So deeply was he absorbed that he did not hear the opening of the front door, followed by a footstep in the hall. Nor did he hear the stealthy opening of the door of the library; much less did he see the burly figure which advanced on tiptoe to his table.

"Be calm!" said a gruff voice, and a hand was laid on his shoulder.

"Hey! What? Who,—who—are—you?" The merchant prince started in his chair, and beheld a burly form enveloped in

a bear-skin overcoat and full-moon face, spotted with carbuncles.

"Be calm!" said the owner of the face, in a hoarse voice. "There's no occasion to alarm yourself. These things will happen."

The merchant prince was thoroughly amazed.

Opening his small eyes, half concealed by heavy lids, to their fullest extent, he cried: "What do you mean? Who are you?—I don't know you? What—what—"

"I'm Blossom, I am," returned the full-moon face, "*Lay low! Keep dark! I'm Blossom, one of the secret police. Lay low!*"

"My God! Is Evelyn in another scrape?" ejaculated the merchant prince; "I will pay for no more of his misdeeds. There's no use of talking about it. I'll not go his bail, if he rots in the Tombs. I'll —" Mr. Somers doggedly folded his arms, and sat bolt upright in his chair.

With his contracted features, spare form and formal white cravat, he looked the very picture of an unrelenting father.

"Come, hoss, there's no use of that."

"Hoss! Do you apply such words to me," indignantly echoed the merchant prince.

"Be calm, soothingly remarked Blossom. Lay low. Keep dark. Jist answer me one question: Has your son Evelyn a *soot o' rooms* in the upper part o' this house?"

"What do you ask such a question for?" and Mr. Somers opened his eyes again. "He has all the rooms on the third floor, in the body of the mansion—there are four in all."

"Very good. Now, is Evelyn at home?" asked Blossom.

"Don't come so near. The smell of brandy is offensive to me. Faugh!"

"You'll smell brimstone, if you don't take keer!" exclaimed the indignant Blossom. "To think o' sich ingratitude from an old cock like you, when I've come to keep that throat o' yourn from bein' cut by robbers."

"Robbers!" and this time Mr. Somers fairly started from his seat.

"When I've come to purtect your *jugular*,—yes, you need n't wink,—your *jugular*! Oh, it was not for nothing that a Roman consul once remarked that republics is ungrateful."

"Robbers? Robbers! What d'ye mean? Speak—speak—"

Blossom laid his hand upon the merchant's shoulder.

"If you'll promise to keep a secret, and not make a fuss, I'll tell you all. If you go for raisin' a hellabaloo, I'll walk out and leave your jugular to take care of itself."

"I promise, I promise," ejaculated the merchant.

"Then, while you are sittin' in that ere identical chair, there's two crackmen—burglars, you know,—hid up-stairs in your son's room. They're a-waitin' until you put out the lights, and go to sleep, and then,—your cash-box and jugular's the word?—Why, I wouldn't insure your throat for all your fortin."

The merchant prince was seized with a fit of trembling.

"Robbers! in my house! Astounding, a-s-t-o-u-n-d-i-n-g! How did they get in?"

"By your son's night-key, and the front door. You see I was arter these crackmen to-night, and found 'em in a garret of the Yaller Mug. You never patronize the Yaller Mug, do you?"

Mr. Somers nodded "No," with a spasmodic shake of the head.

"Jist afore I pitched into 'em, I listened outside of the garret door, and overheard their plot to conceal themselves in Evelyn's room, until you'd all gone to bed, and then commence operations on your cash-box and jugular. One o' 'em's a convict o' eleven years' standin'. He's been regularly initiated into all the honors of Auburn and Cherry Hill."

"And you arrested them?"

"Do you see this coverlet about my head? That's what I got for attemptin' it. They escaped from the garret, by getting upon the roof, and jumpin' down on a shed. If my calculations are correct, they're up-stairs jist now, preparin' for their campaign on your cash-box and jugular."—

"Cash-box! I have no cash-box. My cash is all in bank!"

"Gammon. It won't do. Behind yer seat is yer iron safe,—one o' th' Salamanders; you're got ten thousand in gold, in that."

Mr. Somers changed color.

"They intend to blow up the lock with powder, after they'd fixed your *jugular*."

Mr. Somers clasped his hands, and shook like a leaf.

"What's to be done, what's to be done!" he cried in perfect agony.

"There's six o' my fellows outside. I've got a special warrant from the authorities. Now, if you've a key to Evelyn's rooms, we'll just go up-stairs and search 'em. You can stand outside, while we go in. But no noise,—no fuss you know."

"But they'll murder you," cried the merchant, "they'll murder me. They'll,"—

Blossom drew a six-barreled revolver from one pocket, and a slung-shot from the other.

"This is my *settler*," he elevated his revolver, "and this, my *gentle persuader*," he brandished the slung-shot.

"Oh!" cried Mr. Somers, "property is no longer respected,—ah! what times we've fallen in!"

"How many folks have you in the house?"

"The servants sleep in the fourth story, over Eveyln's room. The housekeeper sleeps under Evelyn's room, and my room and the room of my private secretary are just above where I am sitting."

"Good. Now take the candle, and come," responded Blossom, "we want you as a witness."

The merchant prince made many signs of hesitation,—winking his heavy lids, rubbing his low forehead with both hands, and pressing his pointed chin between his thumb and forefinger,—but Blossom seized the candle, and made toward the door.

"You are not going to leave me in the dark?" cried Mr. Somers, bounding from his chair.

"Not if you follow the light," responded Blossom; "by-the-by, you may as well bring the keys to Evelyn's room."

With a trembling hand, Mr. Somers lifted a huge bunch of keys from the table.

"There, open all the rooms on the second and fourth floors," he said, and followed Blossom into the hall.

There, shoulder to shoulder, stood six stout figures, in glazed caps and great coats of rough, dark-colored cloth, with a mace or

a pistol protruding from every pocket. They stood as silent as blocks of stone.

"Boys," whispered Blossom, "we'll go up first. You follow and station yourselves on the second landin', so as to be ready when I whistle."

A murmur of assent was heard, and Blossom, light in hand, led the merchant prince toward the stairway which led upward from the center of the hall. At the foot of the stairway, they were confronted by a servant-maid, who had answered the bell when Blossom first rang: her red, round cheeks were pale as ashes, and she clung to the railing of the staircase for support.

"Och, murthor!" she ejaculated, as she beheld the red face of Blossom, and the frightened visage of her master.

Blossom seized her arm with a tight grip.

"Look here, Biddy, do you know how to sleep?" was the inquiry of the rubicund gentleman.

"Slape?" echoed the girl, with eyes like saucers.

"'Cause if you don't go back into the kitchen, and put yourself into a sound sleep d'rectly; yourself, your master and me, will all be murdered in our beds. It 'ud hurt my feelin's, Biddy, to see you with your throat cut, and sich a nice fat throat as it is!"

Biddy uttered a groan, and shrunk back behind the stairway.

"Now then!" and Blossom led the way up-stairs, followed by the lean, angular form of the merchant prince, who turned his head over his shoulder, like a man afraid of ghosts.

They arrived at the small entry at the head of the stairs, on the third floor; three doors opened into the entry; one on the right, one on the left, and the third directly in the background, facing the head of the stairs.

"Hush!" whispered Blossom, "do you hear any noise?"

Advancing on tip-toe, he crouched against the door on the right, and listened. In an instant he came back to the head of the stairs, where stood Mr. Somers, shaking in every nerve.

"It's a snore," said Blossom, "jist go and listen, and see if it's your son's snore."

It required much persuasion to induce the merchant prince to take the step.

"Where are your men?"

Blossom pointed over the merchant's shoulder, to the landing beneath. There, in the gloom, stood the six figures, shoulder to shoulder, and as motionless as stone.

"Now will you go?"

Mr. Somers advanced, and placed his head against the door on the right. After a brief pause, he returned to the head of the stairs where Blossom stood. "It is not my son's snore," he said, "that is, if I am any judge of snores."

Blossom took the light and the keys, and advanced to the door on the right, which he gently tried to open, but found it locked. Making a gesture of caution to the merchant prince, he selected the key of the door from the bunch, softly inserted it, and as softly turned it in the lock. The door opened with a sound. Then stepping on tip-toe, he crossed the threshold, taking the light with him.

Mr. Somers, left alone in the dark, felt his heart march to his throat.

"I shall be murdered,—I know I shall," he muttered, when the light shone on his frightened face again. Blossom stood in the doorway, beckoning to him.

Somers advanced and crossed the threshold.

"Look there," whispered Blossom "now d'ye believe me?"

A huge man, dressed in the jacket and trousers of a convict, was sleeping on the bed, his head thrown back, his mouth wide open, and one arm hanging over the bed-side. His chest heaved with long, deep respirations, and his nostrils emitted a snore of frightful depth.

At this confirmation of the truth of Blossom's statement, Mr. Somers' face became as white as his cravat.

"Look *there*!" whispered Blossom, pointing to a pistol which lay upon the carpet, almost within reach of the brawny hand which hung over the bed-side.

"Good God!" ejaculated Somers.

"Now look *there*!" Blossom pointed to the brandy bottle on the table, and held the light near it. "*Empty*! d'ye see?"

Then Blossom drew from his capacious pocket, certain pieces of rope, each of which

was attached to the middle of a piece of hickory, as hard as iron.

"Hold the light," and like a nurse attending to a sleeping babe, the ingenious Blossom gently attached one of the aforesaid pieces of rope to the ankles of the sleeper, in such a manner, that the two pieces of hickory,—one at either end of the rope,—formed a knot, which a giant would have found it hard to break. As the ankles rested side by side, this feat was not so difficult.

"Now for the wrists," and Blossom quietly regarded the position of the sleeper's hands. One was doubled on his huge chest, the other hung over the bedside. To straighten one arm and lift the other,—to do this gently and without awaking the sleeper,—to tie both wrists together as he had tied the ankles,—this was a difficult task, but Blossom accomplished it. Once the convict moved. "*Don't give it up so easy!*" he muttered and snored again.

Blossom surveyed him with great satisfaction.—"There's muscle, and bone, and fists,—did you ever see sich fists!"

"A perfect brute!" ejaculated Somers.

"Now you stay here, while I go into the next room, and hunt for the tother one."

This room, it will be remembered, communicated with an adjoining apartment by folding-doors. Blossom took the candle and listened; all was silent beyond the folding-doors. He carefully opened these doors, and light in hand, went into the next apartment. A belt of light came through the aperture, and fell upon the tall, spare form of the merchant prince, who, standing in the center of the *first* apartment gazed through the aperture just mentioned, into the *second* room. All the movements of Blossom were open to his gaze.

He saw him approach a bed, whose ruffled coverlet indicated that a man was sleeping there. He saw him bend over this bed, but the burly form of the police-officer hid the face of the sleeper from the sight of the merchant prince. He saw him lift the coverlet, and stand for a moment, as if gazing upon the sleeping man, and then saw him start abruptly from the bed, and turn his step toward the *first* room.

"What's the matter with *you*," cried the merchant prince, "are *you* frightened?"

Truth to tell, the full-moon face of Blossom, spotted with carbuncles, had somewhat changed its color.

"Can't you speak? It's Evelyn who's sleeping yonder,—isn't it? Hadn't you better wake him quietly?"

"Ah my feller," and the broken voice of Blossom, showed that he was *human* after all—all that he had seen in his lifetime,—
"Ah my feller, he'll never wake again."

Somers uttered a cry, seized the light and strode madly into the next room, and turned the bed where the sleeper laid. The fallen jaw, the fixed eyeballs, the hand upon the chest, stained with the blood which flowed from the wound near the heart—he saw it all, and uttered a horrible cry, and fell like a dead man upon the floor.

Blossom seized the light from his hand as he fell, and turning back into the first room blew his whistle. The room was presently occupied by the six assistants.

"There's been murder done here to-night," he said, gruffly: "Potts, examine that pistol near the bed. Unloaded, is it? Gentlemen, take a look at the prisoner and then follow me."

He led the way into the second room, and they all beheld the dead body of Evelyn Somers.

"Two of you carry the old man down stairs and try and rewire him;" two of the assistants lifted the insensible form of the merchant prince, and bore it from the room. "Now, gentlemen, we'll wake the prisoner."

He approached the sleeping convict, followed by four of the policemen, whose faces manifested unmingled horror. He struck the sleeping man on the shoulder,—
"Wake up Gallus. Wake up Gallus, I say!"

After another blow, Ninety-One unclosed his eyes, and looked around with a vague and stupefied stare. It was not until he sat up in bed, that he realized the fact, that his wrists and ankles were pinioned. His gaze wandered from the face of Blossom to the countenances of the other police-officers, and last of all, rested upon his corded hands.

"My luck," he said, quietly,—
"curse you, you needn't awakened a fellow in his sleep. Why couldn't you have waited till mor-nin'?"

And he sank back on the bed again.

Blossom seized a pitcher filled with water, which stood upon a table, and dashed the contents in the convict's face.

Thoroughly awake, and thoroughly enraged, Ninety-One started up in the bed, and gave utterance to a volley of curses.

Blossom made a sign with his hand; the four policemen seized the convict and bore him into the second room, while Blossom held the light over the dead man's livid face and bloody chest.

"Do you see that bullet-hole?" said Blossom; "the pistol was found a-side of your bed, near your hand. Gallus, you'll have to dance on nothin', I'm werry much afeard you will. But it'll take a strong rope to hang you."

"What!" shouted Ninety-One, "you don't mean to say,—" he cast a horrified look at the dead man, and then, like a flash of lightning, the whole matter became as plain as day to him. "Oh, Thirty-One," he groaned between his set-teeth, "this is your dodge,—is it? Oh, Thirty-One, this is another little item in our long account."

"What do you say?" asked one of the policemen. Ninety-One relapsed into a dogged silence. They could not force another word from him. Carrying him back into the first room, they laid him on the bed, and secured his ankles and wrists with additional cords. Meanwhile, they could peruse at their leisure, that face, whose deep jaw, solid chin, and massive throat, covered with a stiff beard, manifested at once, immense muscular power, and an indomitable will. The eyes of the convict, overhung by his bushy brows, the cheeks disfigured by a hideous scar, the square forehead, with the protuberance in the center, appearing amid masses of gray hair,—all these details, were observed by the spectators, as they added new cords to the ankles and the wrists of Ninety-One.

His chest shook with a burst of laughter, "Don't give it up so easy!" he cried, "I'll be even with you yet, Thirty-One."

"Search all the apartments,—we must find his comrade," exclaimed Blossom,—“a pale-faced young devil, whom I seen with him, last night, in the cars."

Ninety-One started, even as he lay pinioned upon the bed.—“Oh, Thirty-One,” he

groaned, “and you must bring the boy in it, too, must you? Just add another figure to our account.”

The four rooms were thoroughly searched, but the comrade was not found.

“Come, boys,” said Blossom, “we’ll go down-stairs and talk this matter over. Gallus,” directing his conversation to Ninety-One, “we’ll see you again, presently.”

Ninety-One saw them cross the threshold, and heard the key turn in the lock. He was alone in the darkness, and with the dead.

As Blossom, followed by the policemen, passed down stairs, he was confronted on the second landing by the affrighted servants,—some of them but thinly clad,—who assailed him with questions. Instead of answering these multiplied queries, Blossom addressed his conversation to a portly dame of some forty years, who appeared in her night-dress and with an enormous nightcap.

“The housekeeper, I believe, Ma’am?”

“Yes, sir,—Mrs. Tompkins,” replied the dame, “Oh, do tell me, what does this all mean?”

“How’s the old gentleman?” asked Blossom.

“In his room. He’s reviving. Mr. Van Huyden, his private secretary is with him. But do tell us the truth of this affair—what—what, does it all mean?”

“Madam, it means murder and blood and an old convict. Excuse me, I must go—down-stairs.”

While the house rang with the exclamations of his affrighted listeners, Blossom passed down stairs, and, with his assistants, entered the Library.

“The question afore the house, gentlemen, is as follows,”—and Blossom sank into the chair of the merchant prince—“Shall we keep the prisoner up-stairs all night, or shall we take him to the Tombs?”

Various opinions were given by the policemen, and the debate assumed quite an animated form, Blossom, in all the dignity of his bear-skin coat and carbuncled visage, presiding as moderator.

“Address the cheer,” he mildly exclaimed, as the debate grew warm. “Allow me to remark, gentlemen, that Stuffletz, there, is very sensible. Stuff, you think as the coro-

ner's inquest will be held up-stairs by arly daylight to-morrow mornin' it 'ud be better to keep the prisoner there so as to confront him with the body? That's your opinion, Stuff. Well, I can't speak for you, gentlemen, as I don't b'long to the reg'lar police,—(I'm only an *extra*, you know!)—but it seems to me, Stuff, is right. Therefore, let the prisoner stay up-stairs all night; the room is safe, and I'll watch him mesself. Beside, you don't think he's a-goin' to tumble himself out of a third story winder, or vanish in a puff o' brimstone, as the devil does in the new play at the Bowery—do you?"

There was no one to gainsay the strong position thus assumed by Poke-Berry Blossom, Esq.

"And then I kin have a little private chat with him, in regard to the \$71,000,—I guess I can," he muttered to himself.

"What's the occasion of this confusion?" said a bland voice; and, clad in his elegant white coat, with his cloak drooping from his right shoulder, Colonel Tarleton advanced from the doorway to the light. "Passing by I saw Mr. Somers' door open, and hear an uproar,—what is the matter, gentlemen? My old friend, Mr. Somers, is not ill, I hope?"

"Evelyn, his son, has been shot," bluntly responded Blossom—"by an old convict, who had hid himself in the third story, with the idea o' attackin' old Somers' cash-box and jugular."

Colonel Tarleton, evidently shocked, raised his hand to his forehead and staggered to a chair.

"Evelyn shot!" he gasped, after a long pause.—"Surely you dream. The particulars, the particulars—"

Blossom recapitulated the particulars of the case, according to the best of his knowledge.

"It is too horrible, too horrible," cried Tarleton, and his extreme agitation was perceptible to the policemen. "My young friend Evelyn murdered! Ah!—" he started from the chair, and fell back again with his head in his hands.

"But we've got the old rag'muffin," cried Blossom, "safe and tight; third story, back room."

Tarleton started from the chair and approached Blossom,—his pale face stamped with hatred and revenge.

"Mr. Blossom," he said, and snatched the revolver from the pocket of the rubicund gentleman. "Hah! it's loaded in six barrels! Murdered Evelyn—in the back room you say—I'll have the scoundrel's life!"

He snatched the candle from the table, and rushed to the door. The policemen did not recover from their surprise, until they heard his steps on the stairs.

"After him, after him,—there'll be mischief," shouted Blossom, and he rushed after Tarleton, followed by the six policemen. Tarleton's shouts of vengeance resounded through the house, and once more drew the servants, both men and women, to the landing-place at the head of the stairs. That figure attracted every eye—a man attired in a white coat, his face wild, his hair streaming behind him, a loaded pistol in one hand and a light in the other.

"Ketch his coat-tails," shouted Blossom, and, followed by policemen and servant-maids, he rushed up the second stairway.

He found Tarleton in the act of forcing the door on the *right*, which led into the room where Ninety-One was imprisoned.

"It is locked! Damnation!" shouted Tarleton, roaring like a madman. "Will no one give me the key?"

"I'll tell you what I'll give you," was the remark of Blossom. "I'll give you *one* under yer ear, if you don't keep quiet,—"

But his threat came too late. Tarleton stepped back and then plunged madly against the door. It yielded with a crash. Then, with Blossom and the crowd at his heels, he rushed into the room, brandishing the pistol, as the light which he held fell upon his convulsed features,—

"Where is the wretch?—show him to me! Where is the murderer of poor Evelyn?"

"Blossom involuntarily turned his eyes toward the bed. It was empty. Ninety-One was not there. His gaze traversed the room: a door, looking like the doorway of a closet, stood wide open opposite the bed. It required but a moment to ascertain that the door opened upon a stairway.

"By —! shouted Blossom, "he's gone!"

His comrade has been concealed somewhere, and has cut him loose."

"Gone!" echoed police-officers and servants.

"Gone!" ejaculated Tarleton, and fell back into a chair, and his head sunk upon his breast.

There he remained muttering and moaning, while the four apartments on the third floor were searched in every corner by Blossom and his gang. The search was vain.

"He can't be got far," cried Blossom. "Some o' you go down into the yard, and I'll s'arch this staircase."

Thus speaking, he took the light and disappeared through the open doorway of the staircase, while the other police-officers hastily descended the main stairway.

Tarleton remained at least five minutes in the darkness, while shouts were heard in the yard behind the mansion. Then, emerging from the room, he descended to the second floor, where he was confronted by the housekeeper, who was struck with pity at the sight of his haggard face.

"I am weak—I am faint; allow me to lean upon your arm," said Tarleton, and supported his weight upon the fat arm of the good lady.—"Support me to the bed-chamber of my dear friend Somers,—the father of poor murdered Evelyn."

"This way, sir," said the housekeeper, kindly, "he's in there, with his private secretary—"

"With his *private secretary*, did you say?" faintly exclaimed Tarleton. "Close the door after me, good madam, I wish to talk with the dear old man."

He entered the bedchamber, leaving the housekeeper at the door.

CHAPTER XII.

"SHOW ME THE WAY."

A SINGLE lamp stood on a table, near a bed which was surmounted by a canopy of silken curtains. The room was spacious and elegant; chairs, carpet, the marble mantle, elaborately carved, and the ceiling adorned with an elaborate painting,—all served to show that the merchant prince slept in a "place of state." Every detail of that richly-furnished apartment, said "Gold!" as

plainly as though a voice was speaking it all the while.

His lean form, attired in every-day apparel, was stretched upon the bed, and through the aperture in the curtains, the lamp-light fell upon one side of his face. He appeared to be sleeping. His arms lay listlessly by his side, and his head was thrown back upon the pillow. His breathing was audible in the most distant corner of the chamber.

"Gulian," said Tarleton, who seemed to recover his usual strength and spirit, as soon as he entered the room, "Where are you, my dear?"

The slight form of the private secretary advanced from among the curtains at the foot of the bed. His face, almost feminine in its expression, appeared in the light, with tears glistening on the cheeks. It was a beautiful face, illumined by large, clear eyes, and framed in the wavy hair, which flowed in rich masses to his shoulders. At sight of the elegant Colonel, the blue eyes of the boy shone with a look of terror. He started back, folding his hands over the frock coat, which enveloped his boyish shape.

"Ah, my God,—you here!" was his exclamation, "when will you cease to persecute me?"

The Colonel smiled, patted his elegant whiskers, and drawing nearer to the boy, who seemed to *cringe* away from his touch, he said in his blandest tone,—

"Persecute you! Well, that is clever!—Talk of gratitude again in this world! I took you when you were a miserable foundling, a wretched little baby, without father, mother, or name. I placed you in the quiet of a country town, where you received an elegant education. I gave you a name,—a fancy name, I admit—the name which you now wear—and when I visited you, once or twice a year, you called me by the name of father. How I gained money to support you these nineteen or twenty years, and to adorn that fine intellect of yours, with a finished education,—why, you don't know, and I scarcely can tell, myself. But after these years of protection and support, I appeared at your home in the country, and asked a simple favor at your hands. Ay, child, the man you delighted to call father asked in return for all that he had done for you, a

favor—only one favor—and that of the simplest character. Where was your gratitude? You refused me; you fled from your home in the country, and I lost sight of you until to-night, when I find my lost lamb, in the employment of the rich merchant. His private secretary, forsooth!”

“Hush,” exclaimed Gulian, with a deprecatory gesture, “You will wake Mr. Somers. He has had one convulsion already, and it may prove fatal. I have sent for a doctor,—oh, why does he not come?”

“You shall not avoid me in that way, my young friend,” said Tarleton. He laid his hand on the arm of the boy, and bent his face so near to him that the latter felt the Colonel’s breath upon his forehead. “The money which I bestowed upon your education, I obtained by what the world calls *felony*. For you—for you—” his voice sunk to a deeper tone, and his eyes flashed with anger; “for you I spent some years in that delightful retreat, which is known to vulgar ears by the word,—PENITENTIARY!”

“God help me,” cried the boy, affrighted by the expression which stamped the Colonel’s face.

“*Penitentiary* or *jail*, call it what you will, I spent some years there for your sake. And do you wish to evade me now when, I tell you that I reared you but for one object, and that object dearer to me than life? You ran away from my guardianship; you attempt to conceal yourself from me; you attempt to foil the hope for which I have suffered the tortures of the damned these twenty years? Come, my boy, you’ll think better of it.”

The smile of the Colonel was altogether fiendish. The boy sank on his knees, and raised to the Colonel’s gaze that beautiful face stamped with terror, and bathed in tears.

“Oh, pardon me—forgive me!” he cried, “Do not kill me—”

“Kill you! Pshaw!”

“Let me live an obscure life, away from your observation; let me be humble, poor and unknown; as you value the hope of salvation, do not—I beseech you on my knees—do not ask me to comply with your request!”

“If you don’t get up, I may be tempted to strike you,” was the brutal remark of the Colonel. “Pitiful wretch! Hark ye,” he bent his head,—“the robber who this night

murdered Evelyn Somers, gained admittance to this house by means of a night-key. He had an *accomplice* in the house, who supplied him with the key. That accomplice, (let us suppose a case) was yourself—”

“Me!” cried the boy, in utter horror.

“I can *obtain* evidence of the fact,” continued the Colonel, and paused. “You had better think twice before you enter the lists with me and attempt to thwart my will.”

The boy, thus kneeling, did not reply, but buried his face in his hands, and his flowing hair hid those hands with its luxurious waves. He shook in every nerve with agony. He sobbed aloud.

“Will you be quiet?” the Colonel seized him roughly by the shoulder, “or shall I throttle you?”

“Yes, kill me, *fiend*, kill me, oh! kill me with one blow!” the boy raised his face, and pronounced these words, his eyes flashing with hatred, as he uttered the word “*fiend*.” There was something startling in the look of mortal hatred which had so suddenly fixed itself upon that beautiful face. Even the Colonel was startled.

“Nay, nay, my child,” he said in a soothing tone, “get up, get up, that’s a dear child—I meant no harm—”

At this moment the conversation was interrupted by a hollow voice.

“You must pay, sir: That’s my way.—You must pay or you must go.”

The business-like nature, the every-day character of these words, was in painful contrast with the hollow accent which accompanied their utterance. At the sound the boy sprang to his feet, and the Colonel started as though a pistol had exploded at his ear.

The merchant prince had risen into a sitting posture. His thin features, low, broad forehead, wide mouth, with thin lips and pointed chin, were thrown strongly into view by the white cravat which encircled his throat. Those features were bathed in moisture. The small eyes, at other times half concealed by heavy lids, were now expanded in a singular stare,—a stare which made the blood of the Colonel grow cold in his veins.

“God bless us! What’s the matter with you, good Mr. Somers?” he ejaculated.

But the rich man did not heed him.

"I wouldn't give a snap for your Reading Railroad — bad stock — bad stock — it must burst. It *will* burst, I say. Pay, pay, pay, or go! That's the only way to do business. D'y'e suppose I'm an ass? The note *can't* lie over. If you don't meet it, it shall be protested.

As he uttered these incoherent words, his expanding eyes still fixed, he inserted his tremulous hand in his waist-coat pocket, and took from thence a GOLDEN EAGLE, which he brought near his eyes, gazing at it long and eagerly.

"He's delirious," ejaculated Tarleton, "why don't you go for a doctor?"

"Oh, what shall I do?" cried Gulian, rushing to the door, "why doesn't the doctor come?"

But at the door he was confronted by the buxom housekeeper, who whispered, "Our doctor is out of town, but one of the servants has found another one: he's writing down-stairs."

"Quick! Quick! Bring him at once;" and Gulian, in his flight, pushed the housekeeper out of the room.

Mr. Somers still remained in a sitting posture, his eye fixed upon the golden eagle.

"Tell Jenks to foreclose," he muttered, "I've nothing to do with the man's wife and children. It isn't in the way of business. The mortgage isn't paid, and we must sell — sell — sell, — sell," he repeated until his voice died away in a murmur.

The doctor entered the room. "Where is our patient?" he said, as he advanced to the bedside. He was a man somewhat advanced in years, with bent figure and stooping shoulders. He was clad in an old-fashioned surtout, with nine or ten heavy capes hanging about his shoulders; and, as if to protect him from the cold, a bright-red kerchief was tied about his neck and the lower part of his face. He wore a black fur hat, with an ample brim, which effectually shaded his features.

The Colonel started at the sight of this singular figure. "Our friend of the blue capes, as I'm alive!" he muttered half aloud.

The doctor advanced to the bedside. — "You will excuse me for retaining my hat and this kerchief about my neck," he said in

his mild voice, "I am suffering from a severe cold." He then directed his attention to the sick man, while Gulian and Tarleton watched his movements, with evident interest.

The doctor did not touch the merchant; he stood by the bedside, gazing upon him silently.

"What's the matter with our friend?" whispered Tarleton.

The doctor did not answer. He remained motionless by the bedside, surveying the quivering features and fixed eyes of the afflicted man.

"This person," exclaimed the doctor, after a long pause, is not suffering from a physical complaint. His mind is afflicted. From the talk of the servants in the hall, I learned that he has this night lost his only son, by the hands of a murderer. The shock has been too great for him. My young friend," he addressed Gulian, who stood at his back, "it were as well to send for a clergyman."

Gulian hurried to the door, and whispered to the housekeeper. Returning to the bedside, he found the doctor seated in a chair, with a watch in his hand, in full view of the delirious man. The Colonel, grasping the bed-curtain, stood behind him, in an attitude of profound thought, yet with a faint smile upon his lips.

As for the merchant prince, seated bolt upright in the bed, he clutched the golden eagle, (which seemed to have magnetized his gaze), and babbled in his delirium —

"You an heir of Trinity Church?" he said, with a mocking smile upon his thin lips, "*you* one of the descendants of Anreke Jans Bogardus? Pooh! Pooh! The Church is firm, — *firm*. She defies you. Aaron Burr tried that game, he! he! and found it best to quit, — to quit — to quit. What Trinity Church has got, she will hold, — hold — hold. She buys, — she sells — she sells — she buys — a great business man is Trinity Church! And with your two hundred beggarly heirs of Anreke Jans Bogardus, you will go to law about her title. Pooh!"

"He is going fast," whispered the Doctor, "his mind is killing him. Where are his relatives?"

His relatives! Sad, sad word! His wife had been dead many years, and her relatives

were at a distance; perchance in a foreign land. His *nearest* relative was a corpse, upstairs, with a pistol wound through his heart.

Evelyn Somers, Sen., was one of the richest men in New York, and yet there was not a single relative to stand by his dying-bed. The death-sweat on his fevered brow, the whiteness of death on his quivering lips, the fire of the grave in his expanding eyes, Evelyn Somers, the merchant prince, had neither wife nor child nor relative to stand by him in his last hour. The poor boy who wept by the bed-side was, perchance, his only friend.

"Cornelius Berman, the artist, (who died, I believe, some years ago,) was his only relative in New York: his only son out of view." This was the answer of Colonel Tarleton, to the question of the Doctor.

And the dying man, still sitting bolt upright, one hand on his knee, and the other grasping the golden coin, still babbled in his delirium in the hollow tone of death. He talked of everything. He bought and sold, received rent and distressed tenants, paid notes and protested them, made imaginary sums by the sale of stocks, and achieved imaginary triumphs by the purchase of profitable tracts of land,—it was a frightful scene.

The Doctor shuddered, and as he looked at his watch, muttered a word of prayer.

The Colonel turned his face away, but was forced by an involuntary impulse, to turn again and gaze upon that livid countenance.

The boy Gulian—in the shadows of the room—sunk on his knees and uttered a prayer, broken by sobs.

At length the dying man seemed to recover a portion of his consciousness. Turning his gaze from the golden coin which he still clutched in his fingers, he said in a voice which, in some measure, resembled his every-day tone,—

"Send for a minister, a minister, quick! I am very weak."

The words had scarcely passed his lips, when a soft voice exclaimed, "I am here, my dear friend Somers, I trust that this is not serious. A sad, sad affliction, you have encountered to-night. But you must cheer up, you must, indeed."

The minister had entered the room unperceived, and now stood by the bed-side.

"Herman Barnhurst!" ejaculated Colonel Tarleton.

The tall, slender figure of the clergyman, dressed in deep black, was disclosed to the gaze of the dying man, who gazed intently at his *blonde* face, effeminate in its excessive fairness, and then exclaimed, reaching his hand,—

"Come, I am going. I want you to show me the way!"

"Really, my dear friend," began Barnhurst, passing his hand over his hair, which, straight and brown and of silken softness, fell smoothly behind his ears, "you must bear up. This is not so serious as you imagine."

"I tell you I am going. I have often heard you preach,—once or twice in Trinity—I rather liked you—and now I want you to show me the way! Do you see there?" he extended his trembling hand, "there's the way I'm going. Its all dark. You're a minister of my church too; I want you to *show me the way*?"

There was a terrible emphasis in the accent,—a terrible entreaty in the look of the dying man.

The Rev. Herman Barnhurst sank back in a chair, much affected.

"Has he made his will?" he whispered to the Doctor, "so much property and no heirs: he could do so much good with it. Had not you better send for a lawyer?"

The Doctor regarded, for a moment, the fair complexion, curved nose, warm, full lips, and rounded chin of the young minister; and then answered, in a low voice,

"You are a minister. It is your duty not altogether to preach eloquent sermons, and show a pair of delicate hands from the summit of a marble pulpit. It is your duty to administer comfort by the dying-bed, where humbug is stripped of its mark, and death is the only reality. Do your duty, sir. Save this man's soul."

"Yes, save my soul," cried Somers, who heard the last words of the Doctor, "I don't want the offices of the church; I don't want prayers. I want comfort, comfort; *now*." He paused, and then reaching forth his hand, said in a low voice, half broken by a

burst of horrible laughter, "There's the way I've got to travel. Now tell me, minister, do you really believe that there is anything there? When we die, we die, don't we? Sleep and rot, rot and sleep, don't we?"

Herman, who was an Atheist at heart, though he had never confessed the truth even to himself—Herman, who was a minister for the sake of a large salary, fine carriage, and splendid house—Herman, who was, in fact, an intellectual voluptuary, devoting life and soul to the gratification of one appetite, which had, with him, become a monomania—Herman, now, for the first moment in his life, was conscious of a something *beyond* the grave; conscious that this religion of Christ, the Master, which he used as a trade, was something more than a trade; was a fact, a reality, at once a hope and a judgment.

And the Rev. Herman Barnhurst felt one throe of remorse, and shuddered. Vailing his fair face in his delicate hands, he gave himself up to one moment of terrible reflection.

"He is failing fast," whispered the Doctor; "you had better say a word of hope to him."

"Yes, the camel is going through the eye of the needle," cried Somers, with a burst of shrill laughter. "Minister, did you ever see a camel go through the eye of a needle? Oh! you fellows preach such soft and velvety sermons to us,—but you never say a word about the camel—never a word about the camel. You see us buy and sell,—you see us hard landlords, careful business men,—you see us making money day after day, and year after year, at the cost of human life and human blood,—and you never say a word about the camel. Never! never! Why we *keep* such fellows as you, for our use: for every thousand that we make in *trade*, we give you a good discount, in the way of salary, and so as we go along, we keep a *debit* and *credit* account with what you call Providence. Now rub out my sins, will you? I've paid you for it, I believe!"

"Poor friend! He is delirious!" ejaculated Herman Barnhurst.

The boy Gulian, (unperceived by the doctor,) brought a golden-clasped Bible, and laid it on the minister's knees. Then look-

ing with a shudder at the livid face of the merchant prince, he shrank back into the shadows, first whispering to the minister—"Read to him from this book."

Somers, with his glassy eye, caught a glimpse of the book, as in its splendid binding, it rested on the minister's knees—

"Pooh! pooh! you needn't read. Because if *that* book is true, why then I've made a bad *investment* of my life. I never deceived myself. I always looked upon this thing you call religion as a branch of trade—a cloak—a trap. But now I want you to tell me one thing, (and I've paid enough money to have a decent answer): Do you really believe that there is *anything* after this life? Speak, minister! Don't we go to sleep and rot,—and isn't that all?"

Herman did not answer.

But the voice of the boy Gulian, who was kneeling in the shadows of the death-chamber, broke through the stillness—

"There is something beyond the grave. There is a God! There is a heaven and a hell. There is a hope for the repentant, and there is a judgment for the impenitent."

There was something almost supernatural in the tones of the boy's voice, breaking so slowly and distinctly upon the profound stillness.

The spectators started at the sound; and as for the dying man, he picked at his clothing and at the coverlet with his long fingers, now chilling fast with the cold of death—and muttered incoherent sounds, without sense or meaning of any kind.

"His face has a horrible look!" ejaculated the Colonel; who was half hidden among the curtains of the bed.

"He is going fast," said the Doctor, looking at his watch. "In five minutes all will be over,—"

"And you said, I believe, that he had not made his will?"

It was Herman who spoke. The sensation of remorse had been succeeded by his accustomed tone of feeling. His face was impressed with the profound selfishness which impelled his words. "He had better make his will. Without heirs, he can leave his fortune to the church,—"

"For shame! for shame!" cried the Doctor.

"A little too greedy, my good friend," the Colonel, at his back, remarked. "Allow me to remark, that your conduct manifests too much of the Levite, and too little of the gentleman."

Herman bit his lip, and was silent.

After this, there was no word spoken for a long time.

The spectators watched in silence the struggles of the dying man.

How he died!—I shudder but to write it; and would not write it, were I not convinced that *atheism in the church* is the grand cause of one half of the crimes and evils that afflict the world.

The death-bed of the ATHEIST church-member, with the ATHEIST minister sitting by the bed, was a horrible scene.

I see that picture, now :—

A vast room, furnished with all the incidents of wealth, lofty ceiling, walls adorned with pictures, and carpet that was woven in human blood. A single lamp on the table near the bed, breaks the gloom. The curtains of that bed are of satin, the pillow is of down, the coverlet is spotless as the snow; and there a long slender frame, and a face with the seal of sixty years of life upon it, attract the gaze of silent spectators.

The doctor—his face shaded by the wide rim of his hat, sits by the bed, watch in hand.

Behind him appears the handsome face of Colonel Tarleton—the man of the world, whose form is shrouded in the curtains.

A little apart, kneels the boy, Gulian, whose beautiful face is stamped with awe and bathed in tears.

And near the head of the bed, seated on a chair, which touches the pillow upon which rests the head of the dying—behold the tall form and aquiline face of the minister, who listens to the moans of death, and subdues his conscience into an expression of calm serenity.

The dying man is seized with a spasm, which throws his limbs into horrible contortions. He writhes, and struggles, with hands and feet, as though wrestling with a murderer: he utters horrible cries. At length, raising himself in a sitting posture, he projects his livid face into the light; he reaches forth his arm, and grasps the minister by the wrist,—the minister utters an involuntary

cry of pain,—for that grasp is like the pressure of an iron vice.

"Not a word about the camel,—hey, minister?"

That was the last word of Evelyn Somers, Sen., the merchant prince.

There, projecting from the bed-curtains his livid face,—there, with features distorted and eyes rolling, the last glance upon the evidences of wealth, which filled the chamber,—there, even as he clasped the minister by the wrist, he gasped his last breath, and was a dead man.

It was with an effort that Herman Barnhurst disengaged his wrist from the gripe of the dead man's hand. As he tore the hand away, a golden eagle fell from it, and sparkled in the light, as it fell. The rich man couldn't take it with him, to the place where he was going,—not even one piece of gold.

The Rev. Herman Barnhurst rose and left the room without once looking back.

The doctor, also, rose and straightened the dead man's limbs, and closed his eyes. This done, he drew his broad-brimmed hat over his brow, and left the room without a word—yes, he spoke four words, as he left the place: "One out of seven!" he said.

The Colonel emerged from the curtains; he was ashy pale, and he tottered as he walked. This time his agitation was not a sham. Once he looked back upon the dead man's face, and then directed his steps to the door.

"Remember, Gulian," he whispered as he passed the kneeling boy: "to-morrow I will see you."

Gulian, still on his knees in the center of the apartment, prayed God to be merciful to the dead,—to the dead son, whose corpse lay in the room above, and to the dead father, whose body was stretched before his eyes.

Tarleton paused for a moment on the threshold, with his hand upon the knob of the door—

"If Cornelius Berman were alive, he would inherit this immense estate!" muttered the Colonel. "As it is, here is a palace with two dead bodies in it, and no heir to inherit the wealth of the corpse which only half an hour ago was the owner of half a million dollars. But it is no time to medi-

tate. There's work for me at THE TEMPLE."

Turning from that stately mansion, in which father and son lay dead, we will follow the steps of Rev. Herman Barnhurst.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE REVEREND VOLUPTUARIES.

As the REV. HERMAN BARNHURST passed from the hall-door of the palace of the merchant prince, and descended the marble steps, his thoughts were by no means of a pleasant character. The image of Alice, for the moment forgotten, the thoughts of Herman were occupied with the scene which he had just witnessed,—the hopeless death-bed of the merchant prince.

"The fool!" muttered Herman, drawing his cloak around him, and pulling his hat over his brows, "The miserable fool! To die without making a will, when he has no heirs and the church has done so much for him. Why (in his own phrase) it has been *capital* to him, in the way of reputation; he has grown rich by that reputation; and now he dies, leaving the church and her ministers,—not a single copper, not a single copper."

It was too early for Herman to return to his home,—so he thought,—therefore, he directed his steps toward Broadway, resolving, in spite of the late hour of the night, to pay a visit to one of his most intimate friends.

But, as he left the palace of the merchant prince, a MAN wrapped also in a cloak, and with a cap over his eyes, rose from the shadows behind the marble steps, and walked with an almost noiseless pace in the footsteps of the young clergyman.

This man had seen Herman enter the house of the merchant prince. Standing himself in the darkness behind the steps, he had waited patiently until Herman again appeared. In fact, he had followed the steps of the clergyman for at least three hours previous to the moment when he came to the residence of Evelyn Somers, Sr.; followed him from street to street, from house to house, walking fast or slow, as Herman quickened or moderated his pace; stopping when Herman stopped; and thus, for three long hours, he had dogged the steps of the

clergyman with a patience and perseverance, that must certainly have been the result of some powerful motive.

And now, as the Rev. Herman Barnhurst left the house where the merchant prince lay dead, the MAN in cap and cloak, quietly resumed his march, like a veteran at the tap of the drum.

At the moment when Herman reached a dark point of the street near Broadway, the MAN stole noiselessly to his side and tapped him on the shoulder.

Herman turned with an ejaculation,—half fear, half wonder. The street was dark and deserted; the lights of Broadway shone two hundred yards ahead. Herman, at a glance, saw that himself and the MAN were the only persons visible.

"It's a thief," he thought,—and then, said aloud, in his sweetest voice: "What do you want, my friend?"

"The *twenty-fifth* of December is near," said the MAN, in a slow and significant voice: "I have important information to communicate to you, in relation to the *Van Huyden estate*."

Herman was, of course, interested in the great estate, as one of the SEVEN; but he had a deeper interest in it, than the reader,—at present, can imagine. The words of the MAN, therefore, agitated him deeply.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"That I will tell you, when you have taken me to a place, where we can converse freely together."

Herman hesitated.

"Well, as you will," said the MAN—"It concerns you as much as it does me. You are afraid to grant me an interview. Good night—"

Thus speaking, he carelessly turned away.

Now Herman was afraid of the MAN, but there were other Men of whom he was more afraid. So balancing one fear against another, he came to this conclusion, that the MAN might communicate something, which would save him from the *other Men*, and so he called the stranger back.

"Why this concealment?" he asked.

"You will confess, after we have talked together, that I have good reasons for this concealment," was the answer of the MAN.

"Come, then, with me," said Herman, "I will not take you to my own rooms, but I

will take you to the rooms of a friend. He is out of town and we can converse at our ease."

He led the way toward the room of the Rev. Dr. Bulgin, whom the profane sometimes called Bulgine, which, as the learned know, is good Ethiopian for Steam Engine. This seemed to imply that the Rev. Dr. was a perfect Locomotive in his way.

"My friend Bulgin," said Herman, as they arrived in front of a massive four story building, on a cross street, not more than a quarter of a mile from the head of Broadway, "occupies the entire upper floor of this house, as a study. There he secludes himself while engaged in the composition of his more elaborate works. He has a body servant and a maid servant to wait upon him; and a parlor down stairs, for the reception of his visitors; but he has no communication with the other part of the house. In fact, he never sees the occupants of the boarding-house beneath his study. He rents his rooms of the lady who keeps the boarding-house,—Mrs. Smelgin,—who supplies his meals. Thus, he has the upper part of the house all to himself; and as I have a key to his rooms, we can go up there and talk at our ease."

"But, is not Dr. Bulgin married?" asked the MAN.

"He is. But his lady, on account of her health (she cannot bear the noise of the city), is forced to reside in the country with her father."

"Ah!" said the man.

Herman opened the front door with a night key, and led the way along a hall and up three ranges of stairs, until he came to a door. This door he opened with another key, and followed by the MAN, he entered Dr. Bulgin's study. He then locked the door, and they found themselves enveloped in Egyptian darkness.

"This may be Dr. Bulgin's study, but it strikes me, a little light would not do it much harm."

"Wait a moment," said Barnhurst,—"I'll light the lamp." And presently, by the aid of matches, he lighted a lamp which stood on a table of variegated marble. A globular shade of an exquisite pattern tempered the rays of the lamp, and filled the place with a light that was eminently soft and luxurious.

"Be seated," said Barnhurst, but the stranger remained standing, with his cloak wound about him and his cap drawn over his brows. He was evidently examining the details of the study with an attentive,—may be—an astonished gaze.

Dr. Bulgin's study was worthy of examination.

It was composed of the upper floor of Mrs. Smelgin's boarding-house, and was, therefore, a vast room, its depth and breadth corresponding to the depth and breadth of the house.

It was, at least, thirty yards in length and twenty in breadth, and the ceiling was of corresponding height. Four huge windows faced the east, and four the west.

Thus, vast and roomy, the apartment was furnished in a style which might well excite the attentive gaze of the stranger.

In the center of the southern wall, stood the bookcase, an elegant fabric of rosewood, surmounted by richly-carved work, and crowned with an alabaster bust of Leo the Tenth; the voluptuous Pope who drank his wine, while poor Martin Luther was overturning the world.

The shelves of this bookcase were stored with the choicest books of five languages; some glittering in splendid binding, and others looking ancient and venerable in their faded covers. There were the most recondite works in English, French, German, Spanish; and there were also the most popular works in as many languages. Theology, metaphysics, mathematics, geometry, poetry, the drama, history, fact, fiction,—all were there, and of all manner of shapes, styles and ages. It was a very Noah's Ark of literature, into which seemed to have been admitted *one* specimen, at least, of every book in the universe.

On the right of the bookcase was a sofa that made you sleepy just to look at it; it was so roomy, and its red-velvet cushioning looked so soft and tempting. This sofa was framed in rosewood, with little rosewood cupids wreathed around its legs.

And on the left of the bookcase was another sofa of a richer style, and of a more sleep-impelling exterior.

Above each sofa hung a picture, concealed by a thick curtain.

Along the northern wall of the study were disposed a sofa as magnificent as the others, and a series of marble pedestals and red-velvet arm-chairs. Every pedestal was crowned by an alabaster vase or statue of white marble. There were Eve, Apollo, Canova's Venus, and the Three Graces,—all exquisite originals or exquisite copies, in snowy marble.

The arm-chairs were arm-chairs indeed. Red-velvet cushions and high backs and great broad arms; they were the idea of a happy brain, impregnated with belief in Sancho's "Blessed be the man that invented sleep."

And this northern wall was hung with pictures in massive frames, richly gilt; the frames were exposed, but the pictures were veiled.

In the intervals between the western windows were pedestals crowned with vases, and mosaic tables loaded with objects of *virtu*: exquisite trifles of all sorts, gleaned from the Old World.

And in the intervals between the eastern windows were recesses, covered with hangings of pale crimson. What is concealed in those recesses, doth not yet appear. Both eastern and western windows were curtained with folds of intermingled white and damask, floating luxuriantly from the ceiling to the floor.

The floor was covered with an Axminster carpet of the richest dyes.

Gilt mouldings ran around the ceiling, and in the center thereof, was a cupid, encircled by a huge wreath of roses, and reposing on a day-break cloud.

The table, of variegated marble, which stood in the center of the study, was surrounded by three arm-chairs of the same style as those which lined the wall. It was circular in form, and upon it, appeared an elegant alabaster inkstand, gold pens with pearl handles, gilt-edged paper touched with perfume, a few choice books, and an exquisite "Venus in the Shell," done in alabaster. One of these books was a modern edition of the Golden Ass of Apuleius; and the other was a choice translation of Rabelais.

Altogether, the Rev. Dr. Bulgin's room was one of those rooms worthy of a place

in history; and which, may be, could tell strange histories, were its chairs and tables gifted with the power of speech.

"And this is the study of the Rev. Dr. Bulgin!" ejaculated the MAN.

"It is," replied Herman, flinging himself into an arm-chair; "here he composes his most elaborate theological works."

"Why is his library crowned with that bust of Leo the Tenth, the Atheist and Sensualist?"

"He is writing a work on the age of Luther," replied Herman.

"Oh!" responded the MAN.

"And this!" the MAN drew the vail and bore one of the pictures to the light: "and this! what does it mean?"

"You are inquisitive, sir," replied Herman, somewhat confounded by the sudden disclosure of this singular picture, "why, in fact, Dr. Bulgin is writing a tract *against* immoral pictures."

"A-h!" responded the MAN, and picked from the table the Golden Ass of Apuleius, illustrated with plates, "what does this do here? Are these plates to be understood in a theological sense?"

"Dr. Bulgin is getting up a treatise upon the subject of immoral literature. He has that book as an example."

"And when he writes a treatise on the infernal regions, he'd send there for a piece of the brimstone as an example?"

"You are profane," said Herman, tartly; "let me hope that you will proceed to business."

The MAN placed his cloak on a chair, and his cap on the table. Then seating himself opposite the minister, he gazed steadily in his face. Herman grew red in the face, and felt as though he had suddenly been plunged into an oven.

"Your name is,—is,"—he hesitated.

"Don't you know me?" said the MAN.

"I,—I,—why,—I,—let me see."

Herman shaded his eyes with his hand, and steadily perused the face of the STRANGER, as though, in the effort, to recognize him.

He was a young man of a muscular frame, clad in a single-breasted blue coat, which was buttoned over a broad chest. He was of the medium height. His forehead was

broad; his eyes clear gray; his lips wide and firm; his nose inclining to the aquiline; his chin round and solid. The general expression of his features was that of straightforwardness and energy of character. There was the freshness and the warmth of youth upon his face, and his forehead was stamped with the ideality of genius. As he wore his brown hair in short, thick curls, it marked the outline of his head, and threw his forehead distinctly into view.

"You are,—you are,—where did I see you?" hesitated Herman.

"I am Arthur Dermoyne," was the reply, in an even, but emphatic voice.

Then there was an embarrassing pause.

"Where have I met you?" said Herman, as if in the painful effort to recollect.

"At the house of Mr. Burney, in the city of Philadelphia," was the answer.

"Ah! now I remember!" ejaculated Herman; "Poor, poor Mr. Burney! You have heard of the sad accident which took place last night, ah—ah—?"

Herman buried his face in his hands, and seemed profoundly affected.

"I saw his mangled body at the house half way between New York and Philadelphia, only a few hours ago," the young man's voice was cold and stern, "and now I am in New York, endeavoring to find the scoundrel who abducted his only daughter."

Herman looked at cupid in the ceiling and pretended to brush a hair from his nose—

"Ah, I remember, poor Mr. Burney told me last night, that his child had been abducted. Yes,—” Herman looked at the hair, and held it between his eyes and the light, "he told me about it just before the accident occurred. Poor girl! Poor girl! Oh, by-the-bye," turning suddenly in his arm-chair, but without looking into the face of Dermoyne, "you take an interest in the Burney family. Are you a relative?"

"I have visited the house of Mr. Burney, from time to time, and have seen Alice, his only daughter. You may think me romantic, but to see that girl, so pure, so innocent, so beautiful, was to love her. I will confess that had it not been for a disparity of fortune, and a difference in regard to religious views, between her father and myself,

I would have been most happy to have made her my wife."

The tone of the young man was somewhat agitated; he was endeavoring to suppress his emotions.

"Courage! He does not *know*," muttered Herman to himself, and then assuming a calm look, he continued, aloud: "And she would have made you a noble wife. By-the-bye, you spoke of your profession. A merchant, I suppose?"

"No, sir."

"A lawyer?"

"No, sir."

"A medical gentleman?"

"No, sir."

"You are then —"

"A shoemaker."

"A *WHAT*," ejaculated Herman, jumping from his chair.

"A shoemaker," repeated Arthur Dermoyne. "I gain my bread by the work of my hands, and by the hardest of all kinds of work. I am not only a mechanic, but a shoemaker."

Herman could not repress a burst of laughter.

"Excuse me, but, ha, ha, ha! You are a shoemaker?" And you visited the house of the wealthy Burney, and aspired to his daughter's hand?" — You will excuse me, ha, ha, ha! — but it is so very odd."

Dermoyne's forehead grew dark.

"Yes, I am a shoemaker. I earn my bread by the work of my hands. But before you despise me, you will hear why I am a shoemaker. As an orphaned child, without father or mother, there was no other career before me, than the pauperism of the outcast or the slavery of an apprentice. I chose the latter. The overseers of the poor bound me out to a trade. I grew up without hope, education, or home. In the day-time I worked at an occupation which is work without exercise, and which continued ten years, at ten hours a day, will destroy the constitution of the strongest man. From this hopeless apprenticeship, I passed into the life of a journeyman, and knew what it was to battle with the world for myself. How I worked, starved and worked, matters not, for we folks are born for that kind of thing. But as I sat upon my work-bench, listening

to a book which was read by one of my own brother workmen, I became aware that I was not only poor, but ignorant; that my body was not only enslaved, but also my soul.—Therefore, I taught myself to read; to write; and for three years I have devoted five hours of every night to study."

"And are still a shoemaker?" Herman's smooth face was full of quiet scorn and laughter.

"I am still a shoemaker—a workman at the bench—because I cannot, in *conscience*, enter one of the professions called learned.—I cannot separate myself from that nine-tenths of the human family, who seem to have been only born to work and die—die in mind, as well as body—in order to supply the *idle* tenth with superfluities. Oh! sir, you, who are so learned and eloquent, could you but read the thoughts which enter the heart of the poor shoemaker, who, sitting at his work-bench, in a cramped position, is forced sometimes to reflect upon his fate!—He beholds the lawyer, with a conscience distinct from that given to him by God; a conscience that makes him believe that it is right to grow rich by the tricks and frauds of law. He beholds the doctor, also with the conscience of his class, sending human beings to death by system, and filling graveyards by the exact rule of the schools. He beholds the minister, too often also with but the *conscience* of a class, preaching the thoughts of those who do not work, and failing to give utterance to the agonies of those who do work—who do all the labor, and suffer all the misery in the world. And these classes are respected; honored. They are the true noblemen! Their respectability is shared by the merchant, who grows rich by distributing the products of labor. But as for the shoemaker—pay, the workman, of whatever trade—whose labor produces all the physical *wealth of the world*—who works all life long, and only rests when his head is in the cold grave,—what of him? He is a serf, a slave, a Pariah. On the stage no joke is so piquant as the one which is leveled at the 'tailor,' or the 'cobbler;' in literature, the attempt of an unknown to elevate himself, is matter for a brutal laugh; and even grave men like you, when addressed by a man who, like myself, confesses that he is a—

shoemaker! you burst into laughter, as though the master you profess to serve, was not himself, one day, a workman at the carpenter's bench."

"These words are of the French school." Herman gave the word "French" a withering accent.

"Did the French school produce the New Testament?"

Herman did not answer, but fixed his glance upon cupid in the ceiling.

"But you are educated—why not devote yourself to one of the professions?" and Herman turned his eyes from cupid in the ceiling, to Venus in the Shell.

Dermoyne's face gleamed with a calm seriousness, a deep enthusiasm, which imparted a new life to every lineament.

"Because I do not wish to separate myself from the largest portion of humanity. No, no,—had I the intellect of a Shakspeare, or the religion of a St. Paul, I would not wish to separate myself from the greater portion of God's family—those who are born, who work, who die. No, no! I am waiting—I am waiting!"

"Waiting?" echoed Herman.

"May be the day will come, when, gifted with wealth, I can enter the workshops of Philadelphia, and say to the workmen, 'Come, brothers. Here is CAPITAL. Let us go to the west. Let us find a spot of God's earth unpolluted by white or black slavery. Let us build a community where every man shall work with his hands, and where every man will also have the opportunity to cultivate his mind—to work with his brain.—There every one will have a place to work, and every one will receive the fruits of his work. And there,—oh, my God!—there will we, without priest, or monopolist, or slaveholder, establish in the midst of a band of brothers, the worship of that Christ who was himself a workman, even as he is now, the workman's God.'"

Arthur Dermoyne had started from his chair; his hands were clasped; his gray eyes were filled with tears.

"French ideas—French ideas," cried Herman. "You have been reading French books, young man!"

Arthur looked at the clergyman, and said quietly:

"These ideas were held by the German race who settled in Pennsylvania, in the time of William Penn. Driven from Germany by the hands of Protestant priests, they brought with them to the New World, the '*French ideas*' of the New Testament."

"The Germans who settled Pennsylvania—a stupid race," observed Herman, in calm derision; "Look at some of their descendants."

"The Germans of the present day—or, to speak more distinctly,—the Pennsylvania Germans, descendants of the old stock, who came over about the time of Penn, are a *conquered* race!—"

"A *conquered* race?" echoed Herman.

"*Conquered* by the English language," continued Dermoyne. "As a mass, they are not well instructed either in English or in German, and therefore have no chance to develop, to its fullest extent, the stamina of their race. They know but little of the real history of their ancestors, who first brought to Pennsylvania the great truth, that God is not a God of hatred, pleased with blood, but a God of love, whose great law is the *PROGRESS* of all his children,—that is, the entire family of man, both *HERE* and *HEREAFTER*. And the Pennsylvanian Germans are the scoff and sneer of Yankee swindler and southern braggart; but the day will come, when the descendants of that race will rise to their destiny, and even as the farms of Pennsylvania now show their *physical* progress, so will the entire American continent bear witness to their *intellectual* power. They are of the race of Luther, of Goethe, and of Schiller,—hard to kill,—the men who can work, and the men whose work will make a people strong, a nation great and noble."

"You are of this race?" asked Herman, pulling his cloak gently with his delicate hand.

"My father, (I am told, for he died when I was a child,) was a wealthy farmer, whose wealth was swallowed up by an unjust lawsuit and a fraudulent bank. My grandfather was a wheelwright; my great-grandfather a cobbler; my great-great-grandfather a carpenter; and his father, was a tiller of the field. So you see, I am *nobly* descended," and a smile crossed the lips of Dermoyne.

"Not a single idler or vagabond in our family,—all workers, like their Savior,—all men who eat the bread of honest labor. Ah! I forgot;" he passed his hand over his forehead—"there was a count in our family. This, I confess, is a blot upon us; but when you remember that he forsook his countship in Germany, to become a tiller of the fields in Pennsylvania—about the year 1680—you will look over the fault of his title."

Herman burst into a fit of pleasant laughter.

"You have odd ideas of nobility!" he ejaculated.

"Odd as the New Testament," said Dermoyne; and as old. By-the-bye, this count in our family, was related to the Van Huyden family. (You, also, are one of the seven?—Yes, your name is among the others.) Ah! should the 25th of December give into my hands but a few thousand dollars, I will try and show the world how workmen, united for the common good, can live and work together."

"A few thousands!" laughed Herman, displaying himself at full length on the capacious chair; "why, in case the Seven receive the estate at all, they will divide among them some twenty, perhaps, forty millions of dollars!"

"Forty millions of dollars!" Dermoyne was thunderstruck. He folded his arms, and gazed upon vacancy with fixed eyes. "My God! what might not be done with forty millions!"—he paused and stretched forth his hand, as though a vision of the future dawned upon him.

"Did Mr. Burney—poor friend!—know that you were a—shoemaker?" Once more Herman shaded his eyes with his hand, and regarded the young man with a pleasant smile.

"He did not," answered Dermoyne. "I became acquainted with him,—it matters not how,—and visited his house, where, more than once, I have conversed with his daughter Alice. No, Mr. Burney did me wrong; for while I was a shoemaker, he persisted, (in ignorance of my character,) in thinking me—a *gentleman*! A *gentleman*—an idle vagabond, whose gentility is supported by the labor of honest men.—*Faugh!*"

"Well, I must confess," Herman said with a wave of the hand and a patronizing tone, "that from your manner, gestures, accent, et cetera, I have always taken you for an educated gentleman. But your principles are decidedly ungenteel,—allow me the remark."

Herman began to feel much more at ease.

"He does not dream I have any share in the abduction of Alice!" This thought was comfort and repose to his mind.

But Arthur Dermoyne changed the tone of this pleasant dream by a single question:

"Do *you*,—" he fixed his eyes sternly upon the young minister: "Do you know anything of the retreat of Alice Burney?"

"Do I know anything of the retreat—of—Alice—Burney!" he echoed: "What a question to ask a man of my cloth!"

Dermoyne placed his hand within the breast of his coat, and drew forth ten gold pieces, which he held in the light, in the palm of his hand.

"Every coin gained by days and nights of work—hard work," he said. "It has taken me three years to save that sum. When I thought of Alice as a wife, this little horde, (such was my fancy,) might enable me to furnish a good home. Do you understand me, sir? You who receive five thousand dollars per year for preaching the gospel of your church, can you comprehend how precious is this fortune of one hundred dollars, to a poor workman, who earns his bread by sitting in a cramped position, fourteen hours a day, making shoes?"

"Well, what have I to do with this money?"

"You comprehend that these ten gold pieces are as much to me, as a ten hundred would be to you? These gold pieces will buy books which I earnestly desire; they will help me to relieve a brother workman who happens to be poorer than myself; they will help me to go to the far west, where there is land and home for all. Well, this fortune, I have dedicated to one purpose: To support me, here in New York, on bread and water, until I can discover the hiding-place of Alice Burney, and meet her seducer face to face. How long do you think my gold will furnish me with bread, while I devote day and night to this purpose?"

The iron resolution of the young man's face, made the clergyman feel afraid.

"You will remark," he exclaimed, stretching himself in his chair, and contemplating the whiteness of his nails, "that a witness of our conversation might infer, from the tenor of your discourse, that you have an idea—an idea—" he hesitated, "that I have something to do with the abduction of this young lady. Doubtless you do not mean to convey this impression, and therefore I will thank you to correct the tone of your remarks."

Herman was quite lordly.

"Then you know nothing of the retreat of Alice Burney?"

"The question is an insult—"

"Nothing of her seducer?"

"I repeat it; the question is an insult," and Herman started up in his chair, with flashing eyes and corrugated brow.

"Will you swear that you are ignorant of her retreat, and of the name of her seducer?" coolly continued Dermoyne.

"Men of my cloth do not swear," as coolly returned Herman.

"Allow me to congratulate you upon your ignorance," replied Dermoyne, "for;—will you have the goodness to observe me for a moment?"

While Herman watched him with a wondering eye, the young man replaced the gold pieces in his pocket, and rising from his chair, surveyed the room with an attentive gaze. His eye rested at length upon an iron candlestick, which stood upon a shelf of the library; it was evidently out of place in that luxurious room; and had been left there through the forgetfulness of the servant who took care of the Rev. Dr. Bulgin's study. Dermoyne took this candlestick from the shelf, and then returned to the light.

"Do you see this? It is about six inches long and one inch in diameter. Would it not take a strong man to break that in twain with both hands?"

Herman took the candlestick; examined it attentively: "It would take a Sampson," he said.

"Now look at my hand." Dermoyne extended a hand which, hardened by labor in the palm, was not so large as it was muscular and bony.

"What have I to do with your hand?" exclaimed Herman, in evident disgust.

"Watch me," said Dermoyne; and, resting the candlestick on his right hand, he closed his fingers, and pressed his thumb against it. After an instant he opened his hand again. The iron candlestick was bent nearly double. Dermoyne had accomplished this feat without the appearance of exertion.

"Why, you are a very Hercules!" ejaculated Herman,— "and yet, you are not above the medium height. You do not look like a strong man."

"God has invested me with almost super-human strength," replied Dermoyne, as he stood erect before the minister, resting one hand upon the table: "had it not been for that, hard work would have killed me long ago. I can lift with one hand, a weight, which would task the strength of almost any two men but to budge; I can strike a blow, which, properly planted, would fell an ox; I can—"

"You needn't dilate," interrupted Herman, "the study of the Rev. Dr. Bulgin is not exactly the place for gymnastic experiments—"

"Well, you'll see my drift directly," calmly continued Dermoyne—"I have never dared to use this strength, save in the way of work or occasional exercise. I regard it as a kind of trust, given to me by Providence for a good purpose."

"What purpose, pray?" said Herman, opening his eyes.

"To punish those criminals whom the law does not punish; to protect those victims it does not protect," answered Dermoyne, steadily. "Now, for instance, were I to encounter the seducer of Alice Burney,—were I to stand face to face with him, as I do with you,—were I to place my thumb upon his right temple and my fingers upon his left temple,—thus—"

"You,—you,—" gasped the minister, who suddenly felt the hand of Arthur Dermoyne upon his forehead; the thumb pressed gently upon the right temple and the fingers upon his left—"you,—would,—what?"

"I would, quietly, without a word, crush his skull as you might crush an egg-shell," slowly answered Dermoyne.

He took his hand away. The face of Herman was white as a sheet. He shook in

his velvet chair. For a moment he could not speak.

"I, therefore, congratulate you, that you know nothing of the matter," calmly continued Dermoyne, not seeming to notice the fright of the minister; "for, with a villain like this unknown seducer before me, I would lose all control over myself, and (ere I was aware of it) I would have wiped him out of existence. This would be murder, you are about to remark! So it would. But, is not this seducer a murderer in a three fold sense? First, he has murdered the chastity of this poor girl; and second, in the attempt to get rid of the proof of his guilt, he *may* (who knows?) murder her body and the body of her unborn child."

The room was still as the grave, as Dermoyne concluded the last sentence.

Barnhurst sank back in the chair, helpless as a child. For a moment his self-possession deserted him. His guilt was stamped upon his face.

"Here you can count three murders," continued Dermoyne, not seeming to notice the dismay of the minister,— "the murder of a woman's purity,—the murder of her body,—the murder of her babe. Now, I don't pretend to say, that it would be right for me to kill the three fold murderer, but I do say, that, were I to meet him, and *know* his guilt, that my blood would boil,—my eyes would grow dim,—my hand would be extended, and in an instant, would hold his mangled skull, between the thumb and fingers."

Herman's arms dropped helplessly by his side. He was extended in the capacious chair, a vivid picture of helpless fright.

Dermoyne, whose broad chest and bold features, caught on one side the glow of the light, as he stood erect by the table, gazed upon the minister with a calm look, and continued—

"So, you see, I congratulate you, that you know nothing of the matter—"

"Oh, I am shocked, shocked," and Herman made out to cover his face with his hands, "I am shocked, at the vivid, viv-id," he stammered,— "vivid picture which you have drawn of the crimes of this seducer."

Dermoyne sank quietly into the chair on the opposite side of the table, and shaded

his eyes with his right hand. He also was *thinking*.

For a long pause, there was profound stillness. The lamp on the table shed its luxurious light over the vast room, peopled as it was, with images of wealth, ease and voluptuousness, and upon the figures of these men, seated opposite to each other, and each with his eyes shaded by his hand.

At length, Herman recovering a portion of his self-possession, exclaimed without raising his hands from his face :

"I trust you will end this interview at once. You have given my nerves a severe shock. To-morrow,—to-morrow,—I will talk to you about the Van Huyden estate, about which, I presume, you asked this interview."

Dermoyne raised his hand to his forehead,—somewhat after the manner of Herman,—and surveyed the clergyman with a keen, searching gaze. Gradually a smile, so faint as to be scarcely perceptible, stole over his features.

Herman felt the force of that gaze and his smooth complexion turned from deathly white to scarlet, and from scarlet to deathly white again.

"What next?" he muttered to himself, "does he know? Had I better call for assistance?"

Dermoyne, quietly left his seat, and advancing until he confronted Herman, placed a small piece of paper on the table, and held it firmly under his thumb, so that the words written upon it, were legible in the lamp-light.

"Read that," he said, and his flashing eye was fixed on Barnhurst's face.

Half wondering, half stupefied, Barnhurst bent forward and read :—

Dec. 24, 1844.

MADAM :—Your *patient* will come to-night.
HERMAN BARNHURST.

As he read, Herman looked like a man who has received his death-warrant. The very effort,—and it was a mortal one,—which he made to control himself, only gave a stronger agitation to his quivering lineaments.

"Can you tell where I found this?" whispered Dermoyne. "Near the mangled body

of the father of Alice,—at sunset, but a few hours ago, and at the house half-way between New York and Philadelphia,—there among the ashes, and half consumed by fire, I discovered this precious document. Did you drop this paper from your pocket, my friend, when you sought shelter in the house, after the accident on the railroad, last night?"

Herman had not the power to reply. His eyes were riveted by the half-burned fragment.

"What has the Rev. Herman Barnhurst, the clergyman, to do with MADAM RESIMER, the murderess of unborn children?" continued Dermoyne; "and the *patient*,—who is the *patient*? Is it Alice? This letter is dated the 24th, and to-morrow night, Alice will cross the threshold of that hell, where THE MADAM rules, as the presiding Devil!"

A gleam of hope shot across Herman's soul. "He does not know, that Alice is already in the care of Madam Resimer. Courage,—courage?"

"Have you no answer?" Dermoyne's eye gleamed with deadly light; still holding the paper, he advanced a step nearer to the clergyman.

"Yes, I have an answer!" exclaimed Herman, sinking back in the chair: "that letter is a forgery."

Dermoyne was astonished.

"You never wrote it?"

"Never,—never!" Herman raised his hands to Heaven,—“it is the work of some mortal enemy. Beside, were I guilty, is it reasonable to suppose, that I, a clergyman, would sign my own name to a letter addressed to Madam Resimer?"

Dermoyne was puzzled; he glanced from the letter to Barnhurst's face, and a look of doubt clouded his features.

"A forgery?" he asked.

"An infamous forgery!" cried Barnhurst, resuming his dignity. "Now, that you have wrung my very soul, by an accusation so utterly infamous, so thoroughly improbable, let me hope that you will—" he pointed to the door.

Dermoyne resumed his cap and cloak, first, carefully replacing the letter in his vest pocket.

"By to-morrow," he said, in a voice which rung low and distinct through the apartment,

"by to-morrow, I will know the truth of this matter; and if I discover that this is, indeed, your letter,—if you have, indeed, dishonored poor Alice, and consigned herself and unborn babe, to the infernal mercies of Madam Resimer, why then,"—he moved toward the door, "then there will be one man the less, on the 25th of December."

He opened the door, and was gone ere his words had ceased to echo on the air.

His parting words rung in the very soul of the clergymen, as his footsteps died away on the stairs.

"What an abyss have I escaped!" ejaculated Herman, "exposure, disgrace and death!" He pressed his scented kerchief over his forehead, and wiped away the cold sweat which moistened it. "Fool! he little knows that Alice is already *there*. The Madam is a shrewd woman. Her rooms are dark, her doors secured by double bolts; her secrets are given to the keeping of the grave. This miserable idiot, this cobbler, cannot possibly gain admittance into her mansion? No, no, this thought is idle. And Alice, poor child, why can't I marry her? Her father's death will leave her in possession of a handsome fortune,—why can't I marry her?"

Too well he knew the *only* answer to this question.

"We are all but mortal; she may *die*!" and an expression of remarkable complacency came over his face. Joining his thumbs and fingers in front of his breast, he reflected deeply. "But if she survives?"

His brow became clouded, his lips compressed; all the *vulture* of his soul was written on his vulture-like countenance.

"If she survives!"

While the light disclosed his slender figure, centered in the scarlet cushions of the arm-chair, and fell upon his countenance, revealing the purpose which was written there, Herman still muttered between his set teeth, the question, "If she survives?" To him, it was a question of life and death.

But his meditations were interrupted by a burst of boisterous laughter.

"Why Barnhurst! you are grave as an owl. What's the matter, my dear?"

Herman looked up with a start, and a half-muttered ejaculation. The Rev. Dr.

Bulgin stood before him, his cloak on his arm, and a cap in his hand.

"I thought you was out of town?" cried Herman.

"So I was; a convention of divines, speeches, resolutions, and so forth, you know. But now I'm in town, and,—such an adventure, my dear boy! I must tell you of it."

Before Bulgin tells his adventure, we must look at him. A man of thirty-five years, with broad shoulders, heavy chest and unwieldy limbs; a portly man, some would call him, dressed in black, of course, and with a white cravat about his neck, which was short and fat. Draggled masses of brownish hair stray, in uneven ends, about Bulgin's face and ears; that face is round and shiny,—its hue, a greasy florid,—its brow, broad and low; its eyes large, moist and oyster-like. In a word, the upper part of Bulgin's head indicates the man of intellect; the face, the eyes, mouth, nose and all, tell the story of a nature thoroughly animal,—bestial, would be a truer word.

That head and face were but too true in their indications.

Bulgin was, in intellect, something of a god; in real life; in the gratification of appetite; in habits, strengthened by the growth of years, he was a beast. It may seem a harsh word, but it is the only one that suits Bulgin's case. He was a beast. Not a quiet ox, cropping clover at his ease, nor yet a lordly bull, madly tossing his horns in the center of a grassy field,—of course, we mean nothing of the kind,—but a beast on two legs, gifted with a strong intellect and an immortal soul, and devoting intellect and soul to the full gratification of his beastly nature. He was, withal, a good-humored beast. He enjoyed a joke. His laugh was jovial; reminding you of goblets of wine and suppers of terrapin. His manner was off-hand, free and easy—out of the pulpit, of course; in the pulpit, no one so demure, so zealous and pathetic as the Rev. Dr. Bulgin.

He regarded his ministerial office as a piece of convenient clock-work, invented some years ago, for the purpose of supplying the masses with *something to believe*; and men like himself, with a good salary, a fine

house, plently to eat and drink, fair social position, and free opportunity for the gratification of every appetite.

His creed was a part of this clock-work. It was his living. Therefore, everything that he wrote or uttered, in regard to religion, was true to his creed; true, eloquent, and breathing the loftiest enthusiasm. To doubt his creed, was to doubt his living. Therefore, the Rev. Dr. Bulgin did not doubt his creed, but took it as he found it, and advocated it with all the energy of his intellectual nature.

As to any possible appreciation of the Bible, or of that Savior who, emerging from the shop of a carpenter, came to speak words of hope to all mankind, and, in especial, to that portion who bear all the slavery, and do all the work of the world, the Rev. Dr. Bulgin never troubled himself with thoughts like these; he was above and beyond them; the Bible and the Savior were, in his estimation, convenient parts of that convenient clock-work which afforded him the pleasant sum of five thousand dollars per year.

To look at the Rev. Dr. Bulgin; to see him stand there, with his sensual form and swinish face, you would not think that he was the author of one of the most spiritual works in the world, entitled "Our Communion with the Spirit."

To *know* the Rev. Dr. Bulgin,—to know him when, his stage drapery laid aside, he appeared the thing he was,—you could, by no means, imagine that he was the author of an excellent work on "Private Prayer."

And yet he was no hypocrite; not, at least, in the common sense of the word. He was an intellectual animal whose utmost hopes were bounded by the horizon of this world. Beyond this world there was NOTHING. He was an Atheist. Not an Atheist publishing a paper advocating Atheistic principles, but an Atheist in the pulpit, professing to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You may shudder at the thought, but the Reverend Doctor Bulgin was such a man.

And just such men, in churches of all kinds,—Protestants and Catholics, Orthodox and Heterodox,—have these eighteen hundred years been preaching a clock-work Gospel, leaving unsaid, uncared for, the true

Word of the Master—a Word which says, in one breath, temporal and spiritual prayers—a Word which enjoins the establishment of the kingdom of God, *on earth*, in the physical and intellectual welfare of the greatest portion of mankind.

Too well these Atheists know that were that Word once boldly uttered, their high pulpits and magnificent livings would vanish like cobwebs before the sweeper's broom.

How much evil have such Atheists accomplished in the course of eighteen hundred years?

It will do no harm to think upon this subject, just a little.

"Herman, my boy, I must tell you of my last adventure," said Bulgin, dropping into the seat which Dermoyne had lately occupied; "it will make your mouth water!" He smacked his lips and clapped his hands; the lips were *oily*, and the hands fat and dumpy. "But, first, you must tell me what's the matter with you? Anything wrong in your church?"

"That doesn't trouble me," responded Herman. "True, there is the trial of the Bishop, and the wrangling of these Low Church fellows, about our gowns and altars; our views of the sacrament, and our high notions of the priesthood. These Low Church people are actually *Methodists*. They would rob the church of all dignity, and turn the priest of the altar into the ranter of the conventicle, —"

"We are not troubled with bishops, nor apostolic successions," interrupted Bulgin: "High and Low Church don't trouble us. — Our deacons want a minister; they *call* him and *pay* him. Now, if our church admitted of a bishop, I think that —" he put his thumbs in the arm-holes of his vest, and surveyed his heavy limbs with great complacency, "that your humble servant would make a —"

"Bishop?" cried Herman, with a laugh.

"Ay, and a capital bishop, too, if all be true that these Low Church fellows say of the Bishop of your church. I am a man of *feeling*, eh, my boy?"

This was a home thrust. Notwithstanding his intimacy with Bulgin, Herman did not regard him as a *real* priest of the church, but only as the called teacher of a congrega-

tion. Therefore, he felt the allusion to his bishop the more heavily.

"You were speaking of an adventure?" suggested Herman, anxious to change the subject: "What about it?"

Bulgin flung back his head, and burst into a roar of laughter.

"I'm laughing at my adventure, not at you, my dear Herman. Just imagine my case. I have a patient on my hands, who is rich, crippled with a dozen diseases, and troubled in his mind on some *doctrinal* point. In the morning I visit the old gentleman, and after hearing afresh the list of his diseases, I *soothe* him on the doctrinal point.—Soothe him, and quote the Fathers, and fire him up with a word or two about the Pope. And in the afternoon—" he closed one eye, and looked at Herman in such a manner, that the latter could not avoid a burst of laughter, "in the afternoon, while the old man is asleep, I visit his wife,—young and handsome, and such a love of a woman—and soothe her mind on another doctrinal point. Sometimes my lessons are prolonged until evening, and—ha, ha!—I have my hands full, I assure you."

"You called there to-night, on your way home?" asked Herman, with a smile.

"Just to see if the old gentleman was better, and,—but wait a moment," he rose from his chair, and hurried into the shadows of the room, turned one of the recesses, between the western windows. There he remained, until Herman grew impatient.

"What are you doing," he exclaimed, and as he spoke, Bulgin returned toward the light, "what is this!" and his eyes opened with a wondering stare.

"I'm a cardinal; that is all. The dress of Leo the Tenth, before he became Pope. Don't you think I *look* the character?"

He was attired in a robe of scarlet velvet, which covered his unwieldy form from the neck to the feet, and enveloped his arms in its voluminous sleeves. His florid face appeared beneath the broad rim of a red hat, and upon his broad chest hung a golden chain, to which was appended a huge golden cross. The costume was of the richest texture, and gave something of a lordly appearance to the bulky form of the reverend doctor.

"I'm a cardinal," said Bulgin with a

wink; "There is a nice party of us, who meet to-night, between twelve and one, to confer upon *grave* matters. Every one wears a mask and costume. Will you go with me? There is the robe of a Jesuit yonder, which will fit you to a hair."

Herman's eyes flashed, and he started from his chair.

"The wife of your old *patient*,"—he began.

"Goes as the cardinal's niece, you know! we didn't know the costume of a cardinal's niece, and so I told her to wear a dress-coat and pantaloons. Will you go?"

Herman's face glowed with the full force of his MONOMANIA.

"For wine and feasting, I care not," he cried, "but a scene where beautiful women—" he paused, and fixed his eyes on vacancy, while that singular monomania shone from his humid eyes, and fired his cheeks with a vivid glow. Where are we to go?" he asked.

"To the TEMPLE," said the Rev. Dr. Bulgin, with his finger on his light: "You remember the night when we were there?"

"Remember?" echoed the Rev. Herman Barnhurst, with an accent of inexpressible rapture: "Can I ever forget?" He strode hastily toward the recess. "Where is the Jesuit robe?"

But as he touched the curtain of the recess, he was palsied by a sudden thought.

"Ah, this cobbler, this Dermoyne! He will go to Madame Resimer's with my note in his hand, and pretend to come in my name. He will, at least, induce her to open the doors, and then force his way into her house. If he enters there, I am lost."

Turning to Bulgin, he flung his cloak around him, and took up his cap. "No, sir, I cannot go with you. Excuse me—I am in a great hurry."

He hurried to the door, and disappeared ere Bulgin could answer him with a word.

"Dermoyne has a half an hour's start of me," muttered Herman, as he disappeared, "I must be quick, or I am lost."

"That is cool!" soliloquized Bulgin: "some difficulty about a woman, I suppose: our young friend must be cautious: *exposure* in these matters is fatal."

Without bestowing another word upon his

friend, the Rev. Dr. Bulgin, attired in the cardinal's hat and robe, sank in the arm-chair, and put his feet upon the table, and flung back his head, thus presenting one of the finest pictures of ecclesiastical ease, that ever gratified the eyes of mortal man.

He suffered himself to be seduced into the mazes of an enchanting reverie :

"Ah, that's my ideal of a man," he suffered his eye to rest upon the head of Leo the Tenth : "Without a particle of religion to trouble him, he took care of the spiritual destinies of the world, and at the same time enjoyed his palace, where the wine was of the choicest, and the women of the youngest and most beautiful. He *was* a gentleman. While poor Martin Luther was giving himself a great deal of trouble about this worthless world, Leo had a world of his own, within the Vatican, a world of wit, of wine and beauty. That's my ideal of an ecclesiastic. Religion, its machinery, and its terrors for the masses,—for ourselves," he glanced around his splendid room, "something like *this*, and five thousand a year."

And the good man shook with laughter.

"I must be going,"—he rose to his feet—"It's after twelve now, and before one, I must be at THE TEMPLE."

And while Barnhurst, Bulgin and Dermoyne go forth on their respective ways, let us—although the TEMPLE is very near—gaze upon a scene, by no means lighted by festal lamps, or perfumed with voluptuous flowers. Let us descend into the subterranean world, sunken somewhere in the vicinity of Five Points and the Tombs.

CHAPTER XIV.

BELOW FIVE POINTS.

It is now the hour of twelve, midnight, on the 23d of December, 1844.

We are in the region of the Five Points, near the Tombs, whose sullen walls look still more ominous and gloomy in the wintery starlight.

Enter the narrow door of the frame-house, which seems toppling to the ground. You hear the sound of the violin, and by the light of tallow candles, inserted in tin sconces which are affixed to the blackened walls,

you discover some twenty persons, black, white and chocolate-colored, of all ages and both sexes, dancing and drinking together. It is an orgie—an orgie of crime, drunkenness and rags.

Pass into the next room. By a single light, placed on a table, you discover the features of three or four gamblers,—not gamblers of the gentlemanly stamp, who, in luxurious chambers, prolong the game of "poker" all night long, until the morning breaks, or the champagne gives out,—but gamblers of a lower stamp, ill-dressed fellows, whose highest stake is a shilling, and whose favorite beverage is whisky, and whisky that is only whisky in name, while in fact, it is poison of the vilest sort—whisky classically called "red-eye."

Open a scarcely distinguishable door, at the back of the ruffian who sits at the head of the table. Descend a narrow stairway, or rather ladder, which lands you in the darkness, some twenty feet below the level of the street. Then, in the darkness, feel your way along the passage which turns to the right and left, and from left to right again, until your senses are utterly bewildered. At length, after groping your way in the darkness, over an uneven floor, and between narrow walls; after groping your way you know not how far, you descend a second ladder, ten feet or more, and find yourself confronted by a door. You are at least two stories under ground, and all is dark around you—the sound of voices strikes your ear; but do not be afraid. Find the latch of the door and push it open. A strange scene confronts you.

The Black Senate !

A room or cell, some twenty feet square, is warmed by a small coal stove, which, heated to a red heat, stands in the center, its pipe inserted in the low ceiling, and leading you know not where. Around the stove, by the light of three tallow candles placed upon a packing-box, are grouped some twenty or thirty persons, who listen attentively to the words of the gentleman who is seated by the packing-box.

This gentleman is almost a giant; his chest is broad; his limbs brawny; and his face, black as the "ace of spades," is in strong contrast with his white teeth, white

eyeballs; white eyebrows, and white wool. He is a negro, with flat nose, thick lips, and mouth reaching from ear to ear. His almost giant frame is clad in a sleek suit of blue cloth, and he wears a cravat of spotless whiteness.

His auditors are not so fortunate in the way of dress. Of all colors, from jet black to chocolate-brown, they are clad in all sorts of costumes, only alike in raggedness and squalor.

This is the Black Senate, which has met for business to-night, in this den, two stories under ground. Its deliberations, in point of decorum, may well compare with some other senates,—one in especial, where ‘Liar!’ is occasionally called, fisticuffs exchanged, knives and pistols drawn; and it embraces representatives from all parts of the Union. Whether, like another senate, it has its dramatic characters,—its low clown, melodramatic ruffians, genteel comedian, and high tragedy hero, remains to be seen.

The very black gentleman, by the packing-box—book in one hand and paper and pencil before him—is the speaker of the house. It is our old acquaintance “ROYAL BILL,” lately from South Carolina.

“The genelman frum Varginny hab de floor,” said the speaker, with true parliamentary politeness.

The gentleman from Virginia was a six-foot mulatto, dressed in a ragged coat and trousers of iron gray. As he rose there was an evident sensation; white teeth were shown, and “Go in nigga!” uttered encouragingly by more than one of the colored congressmen.

“Dis nigga rise to de point ob ordah. Dis nigga am taught a great many tings by philosophy. One day, in de ‘baccy field, dis nigga says to hisself, says he, ‘Dat are pig b’longs to massa, so does dis nigga. Dis nigga kill dat pig un eat ‘um—dat be stealin’? Lordy Moses—no! It only be puttin’ one ting dat b’longs to massa into anoder ting dat also b’longs to massa:—dat’s philosophy—”

“S’pose de nigga be caught?” interrupted a colored gentleman, lighting his pipe at the red-hot stove.

“Dat wouldn’t be philosophy,” responded the gentleman from Virginia. “It aint phi-

losophy to be caught. On de contrary it am dam foolishness.”

A murmur of assent pervaded the place.

“Soh, reasonin’ from de pig, dis nigga wor taught by philosophy to tink a great deal—to tink berry much;—and soh, one day de nigga got a kind o’ absen’ minded, and walked off, and forgot to come back.—Dis nigga actooaly did.”

“Dat wor philosophy!” said a voice.

“An’ as de nigga is in bad health, he am on his way to Canada, whar de climate am good for nigga’s pulmonaries. An’ fur fear de nigga mought hurt people’s feelin’, he trabels by night; an’ fur fear he mought be axed questi’n which ‘ud trubble him to ansaw, he carries dese sartificats—”

He showed his certificates—a revolving pistol and a knife. And each one of the colored congressmen produced certificates of a similar character from their rags.

“Lor’, philosophy am a dam good ting!”

“Don’t sweah, nigga!—behave yesself!”

“Read us nudder won ob dem good chap’er from de Bible, Mistaw Speakaw,” cried a dark gentleman, addressing old Royal.—“*Ehud, I hab a message from God to dee!*” Yah-hah-hah!”

“Yah-hah-a-what!” chorused the majority of the congress, showing their teeth and shaking their woolly heads together.

“Jis tell us som’tin’ more about yer ole massa, dat you lick last night,” cried a voice.

“Dat am an ole story,” said old Royal, with dignity. “Suffis it to say, dat about five o’clock last ebenin’, I took massa Harry from de house whar he’d been licked, de night afore, and tuk him in a carriage and put ‘im aboard de cars at Princeton. I gib him some brandy likewise. His back was berry sore—”

Here one of the gentlemen broke in with a parody of a well-known song—

“Oh, carry me back to ole Varginny—
My back am berry sore—”

He began, in rich Ethiopian bass.

“Silence nigga!” said old Royal, sternly, yet, showing his white teeth in a broad grin. “He am in New York at the present time, at de Astor House, I ‘spec’; an’ de Blood-houn’ am with him—”

“De kidnapper!”

"De nigger-catcher!"

Cries like these resounded from twenty throats; and by the way in which knives and pistols were produced and brandished, it was evident that there was a cordial feeling—almost too cordial—entertained by the congress, toward our old friend, Bloodhound.

"To business," said old Royal, surveying the motley crowd. "I hab come to visit you to-night by d'rection ob *somebody dat you don't know*. It am ob de last importance dat you all get yesselves out o' dis town to Canada as quick as de Lord 'ill let you. Darfore I hab provided you wid dem revolvers,"—he pointed to the pistols, "and derfore I am here, to send you on yer ways, for de kidnappers am about."

"Oh, dam de kidnappers!" was the emphatic remark of a dark gentleman; and it was chorused by the congress unanimously.

"It am berry easy to say 'dam de kidnappers,'—berry easy to say dam—dam 's a berry short word; but s'pose de kidnapper hab you, and tie you, and take you down south—eh, nigga? w'at den?"

But before the gentlemen could reply to this pointed question of old Royal's, a circumstance took place which put an entire new face upon the state of affairs.

The door was burst open, and two persons tumbled into the room, heels over head. Descending the stairs in the darkness, these persons had missed their footing, and fell. The door gave way before their united weight, and they rolled into the room in a style more forcible than graceful.

When these persons recovered themselves and rose to their feet, they found themselves encircled by some thirty uplifted knives,—every knife grasped by the hand of a brawny negro. And the cry which greeted them was by no means pleasant to hear:—

"Death to the kidnappers!"

"We're fooled. It's a trap," cried one of the persons—our old friend Bloodhound.

"Trap or no trap, I'll cut the heart of the damned nigger that comes near me," cried the other person, who was none other than our friend Harry Royalton, of Hill Royal, South Carolina.

The cloak had fallen from his shoulders, the cap from his brow. He stood erect, his tall form clad in black, with a gold chain on

the breast, dilating in every muscle. His face, with its large eyes and bushy whiskers—a face by no means unhandsome, as regards mere *animal* beauty—was convulsed with rage. And even as he started to his feet, he drew a revolver from his belt, and stood at bay, the very picture of ferocity and desperation. While his right hand grasped the revolver, his left hand flourished a bowie-knife. Harry Royalton was dangerous.

By his side was the short, stout figure of the Bloodhound, encased to his chin in a rough overcoat, and, with his stiff, gray hairs straggling from beneath his seal-skin cap over his prominent cheek-bones. His small gray eyes, twinkling under his bushy brows, glanced around with a look half desperation, half fear.

And around the twain crowded the negroes, every hand grasping a knife; every face distorted with hatred; and old Royal, in his sleek blue dress and white cravat, prominent in that group of black visages and ragged forms.

"They've got us! Judas Iscar-i-ot! It's a trap, my boy. We'll have to cut ourselves loose."

"Back, you dogs!" shouted Harry, with the attitude and look of command. "The first one that lays a finger on me I'll blow him to —!"

There was a pause of a moment, ere the conflict began. Thirty uplifted knives, awaited only a look, a gesture, from old Royal.

That gentleman, grinning until his white teeth were visible almost from ear to ear, said calmly—"Dis am a revivin' time, wid showers of grace! Some nigga shut dat door and make 'um fast."

His words were instantly obeyed; one of the thirty closed the door and bolted it.

"Now, massa Harry," said old Royal, grinning and showing the whites of his eyes, "dis am a fav'able opportunity fur savin' your poor lost soul. How you back feel, ole boy? Want a leetle more o' de same sort, p'raps? S'pose you draw dat trigger? Jis try. Lor a massa, why dere's enough niggas here to eat you up widout pepper or salt."

Harry laid his finger on the trigger and fired, at the same moment stepping suddenly backward, with the intention of planting

himself against the wall. But he forgot the negroes behind him. As he fired, his heels were tripped up; his ball passed over old Royal's head. Harry was leveled to the floor, and in an instant old Royal's giant-like gripe was on his throat. And by his side, wriggling in the grasp of a huge negro, black as ink, and strong as Hercules, our friend Bloodhound, rubbed his face against the floor.

Over and around these central figures gathered the remainder of the band, filling the den with their shouts—

"Death to the dam kidnappers!"
 "Yah-hah! Cut their dam throats!"
 Cries like these, interspersed with frightful howls, filled the place.

The Bloodhound moaned pitifully; and Harry, with the suffocating gripe of old Royal on his throat, and his back yet raw from the lashes of the previous night, could not repress a groan of agony.

It was a critical moment.

"Do you know, massa Harry,"—and old Royal bent his face down until Harry felt his breath upon his cheek—"Do you know, massa Harry, dat you are not berry far from glory? Kingdom-come am right afore, ole boy—and you am booked—hah! yah!—wid a through ticket."

Old Royal, (who had laid down his pistol,) took a knife from one of the negroes, and, tightening his gripe and pressing his knee more firmly on Harry's breast, he passed the glittering blade before his eyes.

"Oh!" groaned Royalton. The groan was wrung from him by intolérable agony.

"Let me up—a-h!" cried Bloodhound, in a smothered voice, as his face was pressed against the hard boards.

"Death to the dam kidnappers!"

Old Royalton clenched the knife with his left hand, and placed its point against Harry's breast.

"You am bound for glory, massa—" and a negro held a candle over Harry's face, as old Royal spoke.

At this critical moment, even as Harry's life hung on a thread, a violent knocking was heard at the door, and a voice resounded through its panels—

"Old Royal, old Royal, I say! Let me in, quick! quick!"

"Open the door, nigga. It's massa Harry's brack brudder. Let um in, so he can see his brudder bound for glory!"

The door was opened, and Randolph, pale as death, came rushing to the light. Wrapped in the cloak, which concealed his pistols and knives, and which hung about his tall form in heavy folds, he advanced with a footstep at once trembling and eager.

His pale face was stamped with hatred; his blue eyes shone with vengeance, as he at a glance beheld the pitiful condition of his brother.

"Soh, brother of mine, we have met again!" he cried, in a voice which was hoarse and deep with the thirst of vengeance.

"Why, he's whitaw dan his white brudder!" cried the negro who held the light.

"Release him," cried Randolph—"Release him, I say! Tie that fellow there;" he touched Bloodhound with his foot; close the door. You'll see a fight worth seeing; a fight between the master and slave, between brother and brother. Do you hear me, Royal? Let him get up,—"

"But massa 'Dolph!" hesitated old Royal.

"Up, I say!" and Randolph flung his cap and cloak to the floor, and drew two bowie-knives from his belt. "Up, I say! You have heard my history from old Royal?" he glanced around among the negroes.

"Yah-hah! an' ob de lashes dat you gib dis dam kidnapper!" said the negro who held the candle.

"Then stand by and see us settle our last account," cried Randolph. "Let him get up, old Royal."

"Old Royal released his hold, and Harry slowly arose to his feet, and stood face to face with his brother.

"Good evening, brother," said Randolph. "We have met again, and for the last time. One of us will not leave this place alive. Take your choice of knives, brother. I will fight you with my left hand; I swear it by my mother's name!"

Harry looked around with a confused glance—

"It is easy for you to talk," he said, brushing his hand over his forehead and eyes, as if in effort to collect his scattered senses. "Even if I kill you, these niggers will kill me.

They will not let me leave the door alive, even if I master you."

"Old Royal, you know my history; and you know how this man has treated me and my sister—his own flesh and blood. Now swear to me, that in case he is the victor in the contest that is about to take place, you will let him go from this place free and unharmed?"

"I—I—swear it massa 'Dolph; I swear it by de Lord!"

"And you?" Randolph turned to the negroes.

"We does jist as old Royal says," cried the one who held the candle; and the rest muttered their assent.

"Take your choice of knives, brother," said Randolph, as his eyes shone with deadly light, and his face, already pale, grew perfectly colorless: "The handles are toward you; take your choice. Remember I am to fight you with my left hand. You are weak, brother, from the wounds on your back. With my left hand I will fight and kill you."

Harry Royalton took one of the knives—they were ivory handled, silver mounted, and their blades were long, sharp and glittering—and at the same time surveyed his brother from head to foot.

"I can kill him," he thought, and smiled; and then said aloud, "I am ready."

The negroes formed a circle; old Royal held the light, and the brothers stood in the center, silently surveying each other, ere the fatal contest began. Every eye remarked the contrast between their faces. Harry's face flushed with long-pent-up rage, and Randolph's, pallid as a corpse, yet with an ominous light in his eyes. Both tall and well formed; both clad in black, which showed to advantage, their broad chests and muscular arms; there was, despite the color of their eyes and hair, some trace of a family likeness in their faces.

"Come, brother, begin," said Randolph, in a low voice, which was heard distinctly through the profound stillness. "Remember that I am your slave, and that when I have killed you, I, with sister Esther, also your slave, will inherit one seventh of the Van Huyden estate,—remember how you have lashed and hounded us,—remember the

dying words of our father—and then defend yourself: for I must kill you, brother. Come!"

Raising the knife with his left hand, he drew his form to its full height, and stood on his defense.

You might have heard a pin drop in that crowded cellar.

"You damned slave!" shouted Harry, and at the same time, rushed forward, clutching his knife in his right hand. His face was inflamed with rage, his eye steady, his hand firm, and the point of his knife was aimed at his brother's heart.

The intention was deadly, but the knife never harmed Randolph's heart. Even as Harry rushed forward, his knees bent under him, and he fell flat on his face, and the knife dropped from his nerveless fingers. Overcome by the violence of his emotions, which whirled all the blood in his body, in a torrent to his head, he had sunk lifeless on the floor, even as he sprang forward to plunge his knife into his brother's heart.

Randolph, who had prepared himself to meet his brother's blow, was thunderstruck by this unexpected incident.

"De Lord hab touck him," cried old Royal; "he am dead."

Dead! At that word, revenge, vengeance, the memory of his wrongs, and of his brother's baseness, all glided from Randolph's heart, like snow before the flame. In vain he tried to combat this sudden change of feeling. Dead! The word struck him to the soul. He dropped his knife, and sinking on one knee, he placed upon the other the head of his lifeless brother. Harry's eyes were closed, as if in death; his lips hung apart, his face was colorless.

"De Lord hab touck him," again cried old Royal; and his remark was welcomed by a burst of laughter from the thirty negroes, which broke upon the breathless stillness, like the yell of so many devils.

"He is not dead: he has only fainted. Water! water!" cried Randolph. But he cried in vain.

"Dis nigga am not agoin' to gib him one drop to cool him parched tongue," said old Royal, showing his teeth. "What say, niggas?"

"Not a drop! not a dam drop!"

Reaching forth his hand, Randolph seized his cap and cloak, and then started to his feet, with the insensible form of Harry in his arms. Without a word, he moved to the door.

"Massa 'Dolph, massa 'Dolph!" shouted old Royal. "By de Lord, you don't take him from dis place?" and he endeavored to place himself between Randolph and the door.

Randolph saw the determination which was written on his face, and saw the looks and heard the yells of the thirty negroes; and then, without a word, felled old Royal to the floor. One blow of his right hand, planted on the negro's breast, struck him down like an ox under the butcher's ax. When old Royal, mad with rage, rose to his feet again, Randolph had disappeared—disappeared with his brother, whom he bore in his arms to upper air.

"Let's after um," shouted the foremost of the negroes.

Old Royal stepped to the door, (which Randolph had closed after him,) but stopped abruptly on the threshold, as if arrested by a sudden thought.

"Dis nigger meet you 'gin, massa 'Dolph," he muttered, and then, pointing to something which was folded up in one corner, he said, "Dar's game fur you niggas!"

He pointed to the form of poor Bloodhound, who, tied and gagged, lay helpless and groaning on the floor.

It was, perhaps, the most remarkable hour in Bloodhound's life. His hands and feet tightly bound, a coarse handkerchief wound over his mouth, and tied behind his neck, he was deprived of the power of speech or motion. But the power of vision remained. His small gray eyes twinkled fearfully, as he beheld the faces of the thirty negroes—faces that were convulsed with rage, resembling not so much the visages of men as of devils. And he could also hear. He heard the yell from thirty throats, a yell which was chorused with certain words, mingling his own name with an emphatic desire for his blood—his life.

Bloodhound was an old man; his hair was gray with the snows of sixty years, spent in the practice of all the virtues; but Bloodhound felt a peculiar sensation gather about

his heart, at this most remarkable moment of his life.

"Bring forrad de pris'ner," said old Royal, resuming his seat by the packing-box. "Put 'um on him feet. Take de kankercher from him jaw."

He was obeyed. Bloodhound stood erect in the center of the group, his hands and feet tied, but his tongue free. The light, uplifted in the hand of a brawny negro, fell fully upon his corded face, with its gray hair, bushy eyebrows, and wide mouth. Bloodhound's hands shook,—not with cold, for the place was suffocatingly warm,—and Bloodhound trembled in every atom of his short thick-set body. Glancing before him, then to the right and left, and then backward over each shoulder, he saw black faces everywhere, and black hands grasping sharp knives, confronted him at every turn.

"You am a berry handsum man," said old Royal, encouragingly. "Jist look at um, niggas. Do you know de pris'ner?"

The replies to this query came so fast and thick, that we are unable to put them all upon paper.

"He stole me fader!"

"He took me mother from Fildelfy and sold her down south."

"He kidnapped my little boy."

"Dam kidnapper! he stole my wife!"

"I knows him, I does—he does work for de man dat sells niggas in Baltimore."

"Don't you know how he tuk de yaller gal away from Fildelfy, making b'lieve dat her own fader was a-dyin', and sent for her?"

Such were a few of the responses to old Royal's question. It was evident that Bloodhound was *known*. And, although, his hair had grown gray in the practice of all the virtues, it did not give him much pleasure to find that he was known; for he felt that he was in the hands of the wicked.

"Don't hurt me, niggers, don't hurt me! I was 'nt after any of you, upon my word, I was 'nt. I've allays been good to the niggers, when I could get a chance,—don't hurt me!"

"Oh! we won't go fur to hurt massa, will we niggas?" replied old Royal.

"O' cos not. Don't tink of sich a ting! Yah-hah!"

"You see I've got a child at home," faltered Bloodhound, "that is to say, two or three of 'em. You would'nt go to hurt the father of a family, would you?"

"Does you know massa, dat you mos' make dis nigger cry," cried old Royal, with an infernal grin. "Niggas, 'scure dis tear! He am de fader ob a family, dis good man am."

Old Royal wiped away a tear,—that is, an imaginary tear,—and then surveyed the faces of his colored brethren, with a look that turned Bloodhound's heart to ice. He felt that he was lost.

"Don't, don't, d-o-n'-t!" he shrieked, in agony of fear, "d-o-n'-t!"

"Why, who's a-touchin' you? Dar am not a single, solitary, blessed soul, layin' a fingaw on you."

As old Royal spoke, he made a sign with the thumb and forefinger of his right hand. It was obeyed by a huge negro who stood behind Bloodhound,—he struck the wretched man on the back of the head, with the stock of a revolver,—struck him with all the force of his brawny arm,—and the hard, dull sound of the blow, was heard distinctly, even above the fiendish shouts of the negroes.

"Oh! don't, d-o-n'-t!" shrieked Bloodhound, as the blood spurted over his hair and forehead, and even into his eyes; "don't, d-o-n'-t!"

Another blow.—from behind,—brought

him to his knees. And then the thirty, or as many as could get near him, closed round him, shouting and yelling and striking. Every face was distorted with rage; every hand grasped a knife. Old Royal, who calmly surveyed the scene, saw the backs and faces of the negroes; saw the knives glittering, as they rose and fell; but Bloodhound was not to be seen. But his cries were heard, as he madly grappled with the knives which stabbed him,—for his bonds had been cut by one of the band,—and these cries, thick and husky, as though his utterance was choked by blood, would have moved a heart of stone. But every shriek only seemed to give new fire to the rage of the negroes; and gathering closer round the miserable man, they lifted their knives, dripping with his blood, and struck and struck and struck again, until his cries were stilled. As he uttered the last cry, he sprang madly into light, for a moment, shook his bloody hands above his head, and then fell to rise no more.

You would not have liked to have seen the miserable thing which was stretched on the floor, in the center of that horrible circle, a miserable, mangled, shapeless thing, which, only a moment ago, was a living man.

"Now genelman," said old Royal, calmly, "de business bein' done, dis meetin' stand adjourn till funder ordaw. Niggas, I tink you'd bettaw cut stick."

NEW YORK.

ITS

UPPER-TEN AND LOWER MILLION.

PART THIRD.

"THROUGH THE SILENT CITY."

DECEMBER 24, 1844.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEN OF MADAM RESIMER.

YONDER, in the still winter night, THE TEMPLE stands, all dark and sullen without, but bright with festal lights within. Stand here in the dark, and you will see the guests of the temple come,—now one by one,—now two by two,—sometimes in parties of four,—and all are carefully cloaked and masked. They come noiselessly along the dark street: they glide stealthily up the steps, and beneath the arch of the gloomy door. A gentle knock,—the door is slightly opened,—a password is whispered,—and one by one, and two by two, and sometimes in parties of four, the guests of THE TEMPLE glide over its threshold, and pass like shadows from the sight.

Shall we also enter? Not yet. We will wait until the revel is at its height, and until the masks begin to fall.

Meanwhile, we will follow the adventures of ARTHUR DERMOYNE.

About half-past twelve o'clock, Arthur Dermoyne stood in the street, in front of the house of MADAM RESIMER. Wrapped in his cloak, and with his cap drawn over his eyes, he stood in the shadows, and gazed fixedly upon the mansion opposite. It stood in the midst of a crowded street, joined with houses on either side, and yet it stood alone. Black and sullen with its closed shutters and somber exterior, it seemed to bear upon its face the stamp of the infernal crimes which had been committed within its walls. Lofty mansions lined the street, but their wealthy occupants little knew the real character of the woman (woman!—fiend would be a better name) who tenanted the gloomy house.

With great difficulty,—it matters not how,—Arthur had discovered the haunt of this murderess. Her name was one of those names which creep through society like the vague panic which foretells the pestilence; there were few who did not know that such a person existed, and few whose hearts did shrink in loathing, from the very mention of her name. But her haunt, centered in an aristocratic quarter, was comparatively unknown; only her customers and some of the publishers of newspapers, with whom she advertised, were aware that the sullen house which stood in a fashionable street, was the den of MADAM RESIMER.

That such a creature should exist, and grow rich in the city of New York, in the middle of the nineteenth century, by the pursuit of a traffic which, in its incredible infamy, has no name in language, may well excite the horror of every man and woman with a human heart within their bosom.

We read of the female poisoner, and shudder; but console ourselves with the thought, "These things happened in the dark ages, long ago, when knowledge was buried, and the human heart was utterly depraved."

We read in the daily papers the announcement of a wretch that, for a certain price, she will kill the unborn child,—an announcement made in plain terms, and paid for as an advertisement,—and we are dumb. It is the nineteenth century: will not future ages, raking the advertisement of this infamous woman from some dark corner, guess the awful secrets of the nineteenth century from that one infernal blot?

We see a carriage drawn by blooded steeds, whirling through Broadway; its only

occupant a handsomely-attired female. And we say to ourselves, "There goes the murderess of mother and of the unborn child—there goes the wretch who thrives by the slaughter of lost womanhood; who owns a splendid carriage, a fine mansion, and a magnificent fortune, in the very vortex of a depraved social world—there goes the instrument of the very vilest crime known in the annals of Hell."

These words none of us dare say aloud; we only think of them; and we shudder as we see them written on paper,—they are so horribly true.

And as we ask—Why is such a creature needed in the world? Why does she find employment? Why do a hundred such as her, thrive and grow rich in the large cities? we are forced to accept one of these two answers:

1. A bad social state, based upon enormous wealth and enormous poverty,—a social state which gives to the few the very extravagancies of luxury, and deprives the countless many of the barest rights and comforts of life,—finds its natural result in the existence of this Madam Resimer.

Or,—

2. Human nature is thoroughly depraved. A certain portion of the race are born to be damned in this world, as well as in the next. Such creatures as Madam Resimer, are but the proper instruments of that damnation.

Upon my soul, good friend, who read this book, these answers are worthy of some moments of attentive thought.

Arthur Dermoyne stood in the gloom of that winter midnight,—a midnight awful and profound, and only deepened in its solemnity, by the clear, cold light of the wintry stars. A thousand thoughts flitted over his brain, as he gazed upon the fatal house. Was Alice already a tenant of that loathsome den? Again and again, he rejected the thought, but still, it came back upon him, and crept like ice through his veins. If she was, indeed, *within* these walls, what might be her fate ere the morrow's dawn? Arthur could not repress a cry of anguish. A vague picture of a lost woman, put to death in the dark, by the gripe of a fiend in human shape, seemed to pass before him, like a shadow from the other world.

He surveyed the house. A street-lamp, which stood some paces from it, shed a faint gleam over its walls, and served to show, that from cellar to garret, it was closed like a tomb.

The wealthy tenants of the houses on either hand, had evidently retired to their beds. Not a gleam of light shone from their many windows.

The street was profoundly still; a solitary footstep was heard in the distance; above the roof was the midnight sky and the wintry stars.

Arthur crossed the street.

"I remember what the policemen told me, who showed me the way to this place. Three cellar windows protected by sheet-iron bars; they are before me. Beyond these windows a cellar filled with rubbish; then a basement room, where one of the Madam's bullies is in waiting, day and night, ready to do her bidding."

The Madam was provided with two bullies, whom she had raked from the subterranean regions of New York. They were men of immense muscular strength, with the print of their depraved nature upon their brutal faces. One was six feet two inches in height; he was known among his familiars by the succinct name of "DIRK." He used a dirk-knife in his encounters. The other, short, bony, with broad chest and low legs, was known as "Slung-Shot." His favorite weapon was a leaden ball attached to a cord by net-work, with a loop for his wrist. One blow with this "Slung-Shot," rightly administered, on the temple, would kill the strongest man.

These were the Madam's watch-dogs. They formed the police of the mansion. One slept while the other watched, and when any little difficulty occurred, they settled the matter *without noise*. Whether they knew all the secrets of the Madam's mansion, or only regarded it as one of the many haunts of vulgar infamy, which infest New York, does not yet appear.

"Slung-Shot or Dirk, is now on the watch, in the basement room, next the cellar. Suppose I manage to force the bars of one of these windows,—I enter the basement room,—am confronted by one of the bullies. If I escape the dirk and the slung-shot, I may

be handed over to the police, and sent to the Penitentiary on a charge of burglary. In the latter case, I will remain in the Tombs while the 25th of December passes, and thus escape all hope of participation in the settlement of the Van Huyden estate."

It did not take long for Dermoyne to come to a determination.

"True, after all, Barnhurst may be innocent, and Madam Resimer may have nothing to do with the affair. But I cannot remain any longer in this state of harrowing suspense. I will to work,—and at once."

For a moment, he surveyed the street, and you may be sure, that his gaze was keen and anxious. No one was in sight; all was breathlessly still.

Arthur drew from beneath his cloak an iron bar, with which he had provided himself. It was a square bar, about two inches in thickness, and as many feet in length. Next, fixing his gaze on the central window of the cellar, he ascertained that it was protected by three upright bars, separated from each other, by a space of six inches. These bars, scarcely more than an inch in thickness, were inserted into solid pieces of granite, which formed the top and base of the window-frame. Could he displace them from their sockets, by means of the bar which he carried?

Again, he glances up and down the street. Not a soul in sight. He cast an upward glance, over the wall of the house,—still closed in every shutter, and sullen as a vault. He crouched beside the window and began to use his iron bar. It required all the force of his almost supernatural strength, to bend the central bar, but presently it was accomplished. It yielded and was forced from its sockets. Then, resting the iron bar which he grasped, against the wall on the left, he forced the second bar from its socket, and in a few minutes, in a similar manner, the third yielded to the force of his powerful sinews. The three fell into the cellar, and produced a crashing sound as they came into contact with some loose boards.

Arthur did not hesitate a moment. Grasping the iron bar, and folding his cloak about his left arm, he crept through the window and descended into the cellar. All was thick darkness there, but a faint ray came from the door which opened into the basement

room. Trampling over heaps of rubbish and loose piles of boards, Arthur made his way toward the door, and did not pause a single moment, but flinging his weight against its rough boards, he forced the staple which secured it, and burst it open with a crash.

Then his features were fixed, his eyes flashed, he clutched the iron bar, and advancing one step into the basement room, stood ready for the worst.

A candle, burning fast toward its socket, stood on a pine table, and flung its uncertain light over a small room, with cracked ceiling and rough walls, smeared with white-wash. A coal fire smouldered in a narrow grate.

Slung-Shot was there,—not on the watch precisely,—but with his brawny arms resting on the table, and his head bent on his arms. He was fast asleep, and snoring vigorously. An empty brandy bottle which stood near the light, explained the cause of his sleep. Arthur glanced at the door, which opened on the stairway, and then—"Can I cross the room and open the door without waking this wretch?" was his thought.

Slung-Shot, although by no means tall, was evidently a fellow of muscle, as his broad shoulders, (inclosed in a red flannel shirt) and his half-bared arms, served to show. His face was buried against the table, and Arthur could only see the back of his head; his hair closely cut, his long ears, and the greasy locks which dragged in front of each ear, were disclosed in the flickering light.

Arthur, after a moment of hesitation, advanced,—the boards creaked under his tread,—still the ruffian did not move, but snored on, in a deep, sonorous bass. Arthur placed his hand on the latch of the door—

The ruffian then moved. He raised his sleepy head, and Arthur beheld that brutal face, with its low forehead, broken nose and projecting under-jaw.

"Sa-y," he cried, in that peculiar dialect, which, accompanied by an elongation of the lower-jaw, forms the *patois* of a class of ruffians which infests the large cities, "what de thunder you 'bout?"

Arthur grasped his iron bar, but stood motionless as stone, awaiting the assault of the ruffian.

"Dat you Dirk?" continued Slung-Shot, rolling his eyes with a drunken stare; "why de thunder don't you let a feller sleep?"—and then came a round of oaths, uttered in that peculiar dialect, with the lower-jaw elongated and the head shaking briskly, from side to side. After which Slung-Shot sank to sleep again. He had mistaken Arthur for his comrade.

Arthur lifted the latch, and in a moment was ascending the narrow staircase, which led to the hall on the first floor. At the head of the stair was a door, which he opened, and found himself on a carpeted floor, but in utter darkness.

He could hear the beating of his heart, as pausing in the thick darkness, he bent his head and listened.

Not a sound was heard throughout the mansion.

What should be his next step? Enter the parlor on the first floor or ascend the stairway?

"If Alice is concealed within these walls, she must be in one of the rooms up-stairs," he thought, and felt his way toward the staircase. Presently, his hand encountered the banisters, and he began cautiously to ascend to the second floor. Arrived at the head of the stairs, he stopped again and listened: not a sound was heard. Torn as he was by suspense, the cold sweat started upon his forehead: he folded his cloak carefully around his left arm, and grasping the iron bar with his right hand, he listened once more. The house was as soundless, as though a human voice or footstep had never been heard within its walls.

At this moment Arthur was assailed by a terrible doubt—

"What if it should be all a dream?—Barnhurst may be innocent, and as for Alice, she may be at this moment, a hundred miles away! Nay, this house may be the residence of a peaceful family, and have nothing to do with Madam Resimer or her crimes—"

He was shaken by the doubt. Turning in the darkness, he began to descend the stairs—

"Ha! The ruffian in the cellar confirms the story of the policeman who led me here, and who stated that this was the house of Madam Resimer;" this thought flashed

over him and arrested his steps. "I'll not retreat until my suspicions are confirmed or put to rest."

He turned again, and feeling his way up the stairs, and along the hall of the second floor, he began to ascend the second stairway. At the top he paused and listened—all was silent—not a whisper, nor the echo of a sound. Then stretching forth his hand he discovered that at a short distance beyond the stairway, another staircase led upward to the fourth floor. He also came to the conclusion, that from near the top of the stairway, even where he stood, a long and narrow passage led into some remote part of the mansion. For a moment he was at fault. Should he ascend the third stairway to the fourth floor, or should he traverse the long and narrow passage?

"I will ascend to the fourth floor," he thought, when he was arrested by a sound.

Low, very faint, ambiguous in its character, it seemed to proceed from the extremity of the passage, which branched from the head of the second staircase. Was it a faint cry for help—a moan of anguish—or the echo of voices, muffled by thick cowls?

He had no chance to determine.

For at the very moment when this sound reached his ears, it was drowned by another sound. The bell rang through the house, peal after peal, and died away in a dismal echo. There was a pause; it rang again, and this time more violently, as though an angry or frenzied hand grasped the bell-rope.—Another pause, and a light flashed in the face of Dermoyne. It came from the extremity of the passage at the head of the stairs, and was held in the hand of a woman, clad in a flowing wrapper, who advanced along the passage with rapid strides.—Standing at the head of the second stairway, Dermoyne surveyed her as she approached, and at a glance, as she came rapidly toward him, beheld her portly form and florid face.

That face wore a look of unmistakable chagrin.

"No time is to be lost—in a moment she will be here," thought Dermoyne—"can it be Madam Resimer?"

He advanced and shrouded himself in the darkness of the third stairway. Near and nearer grew the sound of footsteps—

"If she looks this way, as she descends the stairs, I am discovered," and Dermoyne could distinctly hear the beating of his heart.

The next moment the rustling of her dress was heard; her heavy strides resounded as she advanced; and then emerging from the passage, she reached the top of the second stairway. Her dress brushed Dermoyne, as he crouched on the first steps of the uppermost stairs; her face was visible in profile for a single instant.

"Curse this light, how it flares, and curse that bell—will it never cease ringing? At such a moment too,—"

And without once looking behind her, she hurriedly descended the second stairs. Dermoyne watched her tall form, with its loose gown, flowing all about her bulky outlines, until she turned the angle of the stairs and disappeared.

CHAPTER II.

"HERMAN, YOU WILL NOT DESERT ME?"

"Now is my time," muttered Dermoyne to himself, and at once he entered the passage, which branched from the head of the stairs, and led to the eastern wing of the mansion. How his heart beat, how his blood bounded in his veins, as he drew near the open door at the extremity of the passage!

On the threshold he paused—his form shrouded by the darkness, but the light from within the room shining upon his forehead—he paused and took a single glance at the scene which was disclosed to his vision.

Never till his dying hour shall he forget that scene.

A small apartment, with windows shut and sealed like the doors of a sepulcher.—On a small table, amid vials and surgical instruments, stands a light, whose rays tremble over the bed, which occupied the greater part of the room. Above the bed, from the darkly-papered walls, smiles a picture of the Virgin Mary, while beneath, by the folds of the coverlet, you may trace the outlines of a human form.

Beside the bed stands a slender man dressed in black, with a heavy pair of gold spectacles on his hooked nose. It is Corkins, the familiar spirit of the Madam. Corkins,

whose slender frame, incased in black, reminds you of the raven, while his face with top-knot, gold spectacles, ferret-like eyes, and pointed beard, reminds you of the owl.

"Bad!" mutters Corkins, "bad!" and he gazes upon the occupant of the bed, knotting his fingers together like a man who is exceedingly perplexed.

The bed and its occupant? Ask us not to picture the full horror of the sight which Arthur saw (from his place of concealment), as Corkins gently drew the coverlet aside.

"Alice!" he did not pronounce the word with his lips, but his heart uttered it—it was echoed in the depths of his soul.

He saw the pale face, and the sunny hair, which fell in a flood upon her bared shoulders. He saw the arms outspread, with the fingers trembling and working as with the impulse of a spasm. He saw the eyes which opened with a dead stare, and fixed vaguely upon the ceiling, had no look of life in their leaden glance. He saw the lips, which were colorless and almost covered with white foam. And as the sufferer moved her head, and flung it back upon the pillow, he saw her throat—no longer white and beautiful—but with swollen veins, writhing with torture, and starting from the discolored skin.

Never, never until his last hour can Arthur forget that sight.

And poor Alice, writhing thus between life and death, talked to herself in a voice husky and faint, and said certain words that made Arthur's blood gather in a flood about his heart:

"Herman, you will not desert me!" she said, and then while the foam was on her lips, she babbled of her father and home—writhing all the while in every nerve and vein.

Arthur entered the room. Corkins turned and beheld him, and uttered a cry of fright. For at that moment Arthur's face was not a pleasant face for any man to look upon, much less Corkins. And the iron bar which Arthur held in his clenched hand, taken into connection with the look on his face, reminded Corkins of stories which he had read—stories which told of living men, bruised suddenly to death by such a hand and such an iron bar. Corkins, therefore, uttered a cry of fright, and

in his terror shook his gold spectacles from his parrot nose.

"Down," said Arthur, in a low voice, "on your knees,"—he pointed to a nook of the room, between the foot of the bed and the wall. "Stay there with your face to the wall."

Corkins obeyed. Trembling to the corner, he sank on his knees, and turned his face away from the door and turned toward the wall, there was such a persuasive eloquence in Arthur's look.

Then Arthur, still clutching the iron bar, drew near the head of the bed, and gazed upon Alice.

Stretching forth her arms, and opening and closing her little hands; flinging back her head, her eyes fixed upon the same point of the ceiling, no matter how she writhed—babbling with foaming lips about her father and her home,—it was one of the saddest sights that ever man beheld.

Arthur could not stand it; He turned his face away, and there was a choking sensation in his throat, and a painful heaving of his chest. His eyeballs were hot and tearless.—He would have given his life to shed a single tear.

But that moment of intolerable anguish was interrupted by the sound of footsteps resounding from the lower part of the mansion. Madam Resimer was returning to the room of Alice.

Arthur at once shrank into the corner where Corkins knelt, and touched the creature with his foot by way of warning. Then placing himself against the wall in such a manner that he could not be seen until the Madam entered the room, he awaited her return.

Her footsteps are on the stairs, and presently they are heard in the passage. Arthur, standing bolt upright against the wall, with the trembling Corkins at his feet, heard the rustling of her dress, as she came brushing along, with her heavy stride. Then he heard her voice—she was speaking to some one who accompanied her.

"There are two," he muttered, and bent his head to listen. He could distinguish her words:

"What a foolish fancy!" this was the voice of the Madam, "to think that any

one could gain admittance to my house against my will. Why, my dear, the idea makes me laugh."

"Yes, but he's such a desperate ruffian," answered a second voice.

It was the voice of Rev. Herman Barnhurst.

CHAPTER III.

HERMAN, ARTHUR, ALICE.

"Oh! my God, I thank thee," muttered Arthur, and clutched the iron bar and crouched closer to the wall.

And ere a moment passed, the Madam entered the room, followed by Barnhurst. She held the light, and he advanced toward the bed.

"It looks rather bad," cried Barnhurst, as he caught sight of the face of Alice.

"Why, where has Corkins gone?" cried the Madam, and turning abruptly she sought for Corkins, and uttered a shriek. At the same instant Barnhurst raised his eyes from the face of Alice, and fell back against the wall, as though a bullet had pierced his temple.

They had at the same instant discovered Dermoyne, who, motionless as stone, stood against the wall, beside the door, his arms folded, and his head sunk on his breast. Thus, with his head drooped on his breast, he raised his eyes and silently surveyed them both, and with the same glance.

Not a word was spoken. The Madam, unable to support herself, sank on the foot of the bed, and Barnhurst, staggered to his feet again, looked around the room with a visage stamped with guilt and terror.

Arthur quietly advanced a step, and closed the door of the room. Then he locked it and put the key in his pocket.

"What do you mean?" cried the Madam, the color rushing into her face.

"No noise," whispered Arthur, "unless indeed,"—and he smiled in a way which she understood,— "unless, indeed, you mean to alarm the neighborhood, and bring the police into the room. Would you like to have the police examine your house?"

The Madam bit her red lip, but did not answer. Arthur passed her, and approached the Rev. Herman Barnhurst.

"Nay, don't be afraid; I will not hurt you," he whispered, as the clergyman stretched forth his hands and retreated toward the wall.

"Come, take courage, man,—look there!"

He pointed to the face of Alice.

Herman, ashy pale, and shaking in every limb, followed the movement of Arthur's hand, but did not utter a word.

"A 'man of your cloth' to be 'suspected'—eh, my friend?" and Arthur, laughed. "A minister of THE Church, to be suspected of seduction and of murder? Is it not a lying tongue that dare charge you, Reverend sir, with such crimes?"

Here, poor Alice, writhing in the bed, spoke a faint word about father, and home.

Barnhurst, cringing against the wall, his smooth complexion changed to a livid paleness, muttered an incoherent word about "reparation."

"Oh, you *shall* make reparation,—never fear; you *shall* make reparation," whispered Dermoyne, his eyes fairly blazing with light. "And you visited her father's house as a minister of God. She heard you preach in the church, and you talked to her in her home. What words you said, I know not; but some forty-eight hours ago you took her from her home; but a few hours have passed since then. The father lies a mangled corpse somewhere between this house and Philadelphia; and Alice, the daughter, is before you. Are you not proud of your work, my reverend friend?"

Herman's eye glanced from the ominous face of Dermoyne, and then to the iron bar which he held in his clenched hand,—

"You will not—kill—me?" he gasped.

Arthur was silent. The veins upon his forehead were swollen; his teeth were locked; his eyes, deep sunken under his down-drawn brows, emitted a steady and sinister light. He was *thinking*.

"Kill you?" he said, in a measured voice, which seemed torn, word by word, through his clenched teeth, from his heart. "Oh, if I could believe your creed—that eternal vengeance is the only future punishment for earthly crimes—why, I would kill you, before you could utter another word. Do you believe that creed? No—wretch! you do not. You have but preached it as a part of that machinery which manufactures your

salary. But now, wretch! as you stand by the death-bed of your victim, with the face of her avenger before you, now search your heart, and answer me—Do you not begin to feel that there is a God?"

It was pitiful to see the poor wretch cringe against the wall, supporting himself with his hands, which he placed behind his back, while his head slowly sunk, and his eyes were riveted to the face of Dermoyne.

"You will not kill me," he faltered; and, with his left hand, tugged at his white cravat, for there was a choking sensation at his throat.

As for the Madam, who stood at the back of Dermoyne, she began to recover some portion of her self-possession, as a hope flashed upon her mind: "The handle of the bell is behind Barnhurst," she muttered to himself; "if he would only touch it, it would resound in the basement, and call Slung-Shot to our aid."

And with flashing eyes, the Madam gazed over Dermoyne's shoulder, watching every movement of the clergyman, and hoping that even in his fright, he might touch the handle of the bell. That bell communicated with the basement room; one movement of the handle, and Slung-Shot would be summoned to the scene.

However, as Barnhurst cringed against the wall, his hands strayed all around the handle of the bell, but did not touch it.

At this crisis, however, the Madam forming suddenly a bold resolution, strode across the floor and placed her bulky form between Dermoyne and the clergyman.

"What do *you* want *here*, any how?" she said, tossing her head and placing her arms a-kimbo. "You are neither the brother nor the husband of this girl. Supposin' you was, what have you to complain of? Haven't I treated her like my own child? Yes, I've been a mother to her—and *that* is a fact."

Dermoyne, for a moment, paused to admire the cool impudence which stamped the florid visage of the madam. Her chin projected, her nose upturned, and her nether lip protruded, she stood there in her flowing wrapper, with a hand on each side of her waist.

"Look there," he said quietly, and pointed to the bed, where the poor girl was stretched

in her agony; her hands quivering and her lips white with foam: "When that poor child entered your house, she was in the enjoyment of good health. What is she now? Shall I go forth from this place and bring a physician to testify as to the nature of your *motherly* treatment?"

The Madam retreated from the gaze of the young man, and felt the force of his words.

Too well she knew what verdict a physician would pass upon her treatment of the young girl.

"The bell-handle is behind you," she whispered, as she passed the cringing Barnhurst. He did not seem to heed her; but the moment that she passed him and resumed her former place, he fixed his stupefied gaze once more upon the visage of Dermoyne.

As for Dermoyne, for a moment he stood buried in profound thought. The clergyman trembled closer to the wall as he remarked the livid paleness of Arthur's face,—the peculiar light in Arthur's eyes.

Dermoyne, after a moment, advanced and extended his hand—"Come," he said, and sought to grasp Barnhurst's hands. But, shuddering and half dead with fright, Herman crouched away from the extended hand,—crouched and cringed away as though he would bury himself in the very wall.

"Come," again repeated Dermoyne, his voice changed and husky. "Come!" He grasped the hand of the clergyman and dragged him to the bedside. "Oh, look upon that sight!" he groaned as the tortured girl writhed before them—"Look upon that sight, and tell me, what fiend of hell ever, even in thought, planned a deed like this?"

"Don't kill me, don't, don't!" faltered Herman.

"This is a strange meeting," continued Dermoyne, with a look that made Herman's blood run cold; "here we are together, you and I and Alice! I that loved her better than life, and would have been glad to have called her by the sacred name of wife. You, that without loving her or caring for her, save as the instrument of your brutal appetite, have made her what she is,—have made her what she is, and brought her here to die in a dark corner, something worse than the death of a dog. And Alice, poor Alice,

who saw you first in the pulpit, and then listened to you and yielded to you in the home,—her father's home,—Alice lies before you now. Hark!"

The poor girl stretched forth her hands, and with the foam still white upon her livid lips, she said, in her wandering way—

"Oh! Herman, dear Herman! it was not *father* that was hurt, was it? Oh! are you sure, are you sure?" And then came wandering words about father, Herman, home, and—her lost condition. There was something too, about returning to father and asking his forgiveness when the *danger* was over.

"And *you* desire her death." In his agony, as he uttered these words, Arthur clutched Herman with a gripe that forced a groan from his lips. "You who have brought her to *this*,—he pointed to the bed,—while I desire her to live; I, that by her death will become the sole inheritor of her father's fortune."

This was a revelation that astounded Herman, half dead as he was, with terror.

"The sole inheritor of her father's fortune!" he echoed.

At this crisis, the Madam darted forward. Arthur saw her hand extended toward the handle of the bell.

"Oh! ring by all means," he exclaimed, "ring, my dear Madam; summon your bullies; we will have as much noise as possible,—perchance, a fight! And then the police will come and examine the little mysteries of your mansion. Will you not ring?"

The Madam's hand dropped to her side, and she slunk back to her former position, her florid face impressed with an expression which was not, altogether, one of serenity or joy.

"You wondered, to-night, why Mr. Burney permitted the poor shoemaker to visit his house. Let me enlighten you a little. Not many years ago, an unknown mechanic called upon the rich merchant, in his library, and proved to the merchant's satisfaction, that he,—the poor mechanic,—had, in his possession, certain papers which established the fact that the immense wealth of Mr. Burney had been obtained by a gross fraud; a fraud which, in a court of law, would

disclose itself in the two-fold shape of *perjury* and *forgery*. The father of the mechanic was the victim; Burney, the criminal; the victim had died poor and broken-hearted; but in the hands of the criminal, the property so illy-gotten, had swelled into an immense fortune. It was the son of the victim who, having lived through a friendless orphanage, now came to Mr. Burney and proved that at any moment he might involve the rich merchant in disgrace and ruin."

"Impossible!" ejaculated Barnhurst.

"The merchant made large offers to the mechanic to obtain his silence,—believing in the true mercantile way, that every man has his price, he offered a good round sum, and doubled it the next moment,—but in vain. The image of his broken-hearted father was before the mechanic,—he could not banish it,—he had but one purpose, and that was, to bring the rich man to utter ruin. This purpose was strong in his heart, when scornful all the offers of the merchant, he rose from his seat and moved toward the door. But at the door his purpose was changed. There he was confronted by the face of a happy, sinless girl,—a girl with all the beauty of a happy, sinless heart, written upon her young face. At the sight, the mechanic relented. Maddened by the thirst for a full and bitter revenge, he could destroy the father, but he had not the heart to destroy the father of that sinless girl. For,—do you hear me,—it was Alice,—it was Alice,—Alice."

The long-restrained agony burst forth at last. With her name upon his lips, he paused,—he buried his face in his hands.

"Alice, Alice, who lies before you now!" He raised his face again; it was distorted by agony; it was bathed in tears.

The clergyman fell on his knees.

"Don't harm me," he faltered, "I will make reparation."

"Up! up! don't kneel to me," shrieked Dermoyne, and he dragged the miserable culprit to his feet. "There's no manner of kneeling or praying between heaven and hell, that can help you, if that poor girl dies. I spared her father for her sake, (and to make my silence perpetual, he made a will, in which he names me as his sole heir,

in case of his daughter's death); I spared her father for her sake, and can you think that I will spare you,—you who have brought her to a shame and death like this?"

He pointed to the bed, and once more the poor girl, writhing in pain, uttered, in a low, pleading voice, "Herman, Herman, do not, oh! do not desert me!"

Dermoyne, at a rapid glance, surveyed the culprit cringing against the wall,—the florid Madam, who stood apart, her face manifesting undeniable chagrin,—and then his gaze rested upon Corkins, who, kneeling in the corner, seemed to have been suddenly stricken dumb. And as he took that rapid glance, his eyes flashed, his face grew paler, his bosom heaved, and a world of thought rushed through his brain; and, in a moment, he had decided upon his course.

He drew near to the Madam: she could not meet the look which he fixed upon her face.

"To-morrow morning, at ten o'clock, I will return to this house," he said, in a low voice; "I hold you responsible for the life of this poor girl. Nay, do not speak; not a word from your accursed lips. Remember!—he drew a step nearer,—to-morrow morning, at ten o'clock, and—I hold you responsible for the life of Alice Burney."

The Madam quailed before his glance; for once, her florid face grew pale. "But how will you obtain entrance into my house?" she thought; and a faint smile crossed her countenance.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RED BOOK.

DERMOYNE flung his cloak over his arm, drew his cap over his forehead, and grasped the iron bar with his right hand.

"Come with me," he said, in a low voice, to Barnhurst. He drew the key from his pocket, and led the way to the door. As though fascinated by his look, Herman followed him,—followed him trembling and with terror stamped on every line of his face.

"At ten o'clock, to-morrow morning, remember!" said Dermoyne, turning his face over his shoulder. He turned the key in

the lock, and stood upon the threshold. "Come with me," he said, quietly, to Barnhurst. "Nay, take the light and walk before me."

Herman, with a quivering hand, seized a lighted lamp and led the way from the room, along the passage. He dared not turn his head. He heard Dermoyne's footsteps at his back, and shook with fright. "Does he intend to murder me?" and then he thought of the iron bar; of the strong hand of Dermoyne; and of his own defenseless head.

"Herman, don't, don't desert me," muttered Alice, in her delirium, as they crossed the threshold.

Dermoyne turned and saw the fixed eyes, the sunny hair, the lips white with foam; saw the writhing form and the hands clasped madly over the half-bared bosom; and then he looked no more.

Along the passage, Herman led the way and down the stairs, Dermoyne following silently at his heels. Thus they descended to the second floor.

"The Madam has a room where she keeps her papers and arranges her most important affairs. Conduct me there."

And Herman, scarce knowing what he did, led the way to the small room in the rear of the second floor,—the small room in which we first beheld the Madam. He entered, followed by Dermoyne, who carefully closed the door, and then, at a glance, surveyed the place. It looked the same as when we first beheld the Madam. The shaded lamp stood on the desk, describing a brief circle of light around it, while the rest of the place was veiled in twilight. On the desk was the seal and the pearl-handled pen, and beside it, was the capacious arm-chair.

"Come here," said Arthur, still in that low voice, but with the face unnaturally pale, and the eyes flashing with steady and ominous light; and he led the way to the desk. Barnhurst obeyed him without a word.

"To-morrow, at ten o'clock, we will return to this mansion," said Dermoyne, fixing his eyes upon the affrighted visage of Barnhurst. "We will return together, and if Alice yet lives, we will go away together; but," he laid his right hand upon the fore-

head of the wretch,—or rather placed his thumb upon the right temple, and his fingers on the left,—“but, if Alice is dead, I will kill you at her bedside.”

There was a determination in his tone,—in his look,—nay, in the very pressure of the hand which touched Barnhurst's forehead; which gave a force to his brief words, that no pen can depict.

Barnhurst fell on his knees, and his head sank on his breast. He had no power to frame a word. He appeared conscious that he was in the hands of his fate.

"Get up, get up, *my friend!*" and Arthur raised him from his knees and placed him in a chair. (Now well we know that it would have been more in accordance with the rules provided for novel writers, for Arthur to have said, "Arise! villain!" but as he simply said, "Get up, *my friend!*" applying a singular emphasis to the italicized words: we feel bound to record his words just as he spoke them).

"I have a few words to say to you," said Arthur; "there's no use of your shuddering when I speak to you, and of crying when I touch you. You must listen to me and listen with all your senses about you. Why, you were courageous enough to blaspheme God, when you used his religion as the instrument of that poor girl's ruin: don't be afraid of me."

"When you leave this place, *my friend,* I will go with you. I will put no restraint upon your actions; you can go where you please, but wherever you go, I will go with you. I will not lose sight of you, until the life or death of Alice Burney is assured. Yes, you can go where you please, talk with whom you please, sleep, eat, drink where it suits you, but everywhere *I will go with you.* We will be together, side by side, until the life or the death of Alice is certain,—together, always together, like twin souls,—do you understand, *my friend?* Until we are assured of the fate of Alice, I will be your *shadow?* Do you comprehend?"

Herman *did* comprehend. The full force of Arthur's determination crowded upon him, impressing every fiber of his soul.

"No,—no,—this cannot be," he faltered,—“If you must wreak your vengeance on me,

kill me at once. But, to be thus accompanied, I will not consent—"

"Kill you?" and there was a sad smile on Dermoyne's face; "do you suppose that the mere act of physical death can atone for the moral and physical death of poor Alice? You commit a wrong, that is murder in a sense, that the basest physical murder can never equal; and you think the sacrifice of your life will atone for that wrong? Faugh! If Alice dies, I will kill you,—be assured of that—I will crush the miserable life which now beats within your brain,—but, first, I will make you die a thousand deaths—I will kill you in soul as well as in body—for every throb which you have made her suffer, you shall render an exact, a fearful account—yes, before I kill your miserable body, I will kill you in reputation, in all that makes life dear, in everything that you hold sacred, or that those with whom you are connected by all or any ties, hold sacred. To do this, I must know all about you, and to know all about you, I must go with you and be your shadow."

"Oh, this is infernal!" groaned Barnhurst, dropping his hands helplessly on his knees, while his head sank back against the chair, "Have you no mercy?"

"A preacher appeared as a demi-god, to the eyes of a sinless girl,—clad in the light of religion, he appeared to her as something more than mortal—aware of this fact, he passed from the pulpit where she heard him preach to her father's home, and there dishonored her. When her dishonor was complete, and a second life throbbed within her, so far from thinking of hiding her shame under the mantle of an honorable marriage, he calmly plotted the murder of his victim and her unborn child. And this preacher now crouches before his executioner, and falters, 'Have you no mercy?'"

"But, I could not marry her," groaned Barnhurst, "it was impossible! impossible!"

"Why?"

Barnhurst buried his face in his hands, but did not answer.

"You killed her to save your reputation," whispered Arthur, "and now I have your life and reputation in my grasp. In the name of Alice, I will use my power. Come! Let us be going. I am ready to attend you."

He took the hat and cloak of the clergy-

man, from a chair, (where Barnhurst had left them before he ascended to the chamber of Alice) and exclaimed with a low bow—

"Your hat and cloak, sir. I am ready."

Barnhurst rose, trembling and livid,—he placed the hat upon his sleeked hair, and wound the cloak about his angular form. For a moment his coward nature seemed stirred, by the extremity of his despair, into something like courage. His eyes (the dark pupils of which you will remember covered each eyeball) flashed madly from his blonde visage, and he gazed from side to side, as if in search of some deadly weapon. At that moment he was prepared for combat and for murder.

Dermoyne caught his eye: never lunatic cowered at the sight of his keeper, as Barnhurst before Dermoyne.

"It won't do. You haven't the 'pluck,'" sneered Arthur,—*"if it was a weak girl, there's no knowing what you might do; but as it is a man and an—executioner."*

"I am ready," was all that Barnhurst could reply.

"One moment, dear friend, and I'll be with you," as he spoke, Dermoyne advanced toward the Madam's Desk. "*I must have a PLEDGE before I go.*"

Before the preacher had time to analyze the meaning of these words, Dermoyne, with one blow of the iron bar, had forced the lock of the Madam's desk. He raised the lid and the light fell upon packages of letters, neatly folded, and upon a large book, square in shape and bound in red morocco.

"The red book!" the words were forced from Barnhurst's lips, as he saw Arthur raise the volume to the light and rapidly examine its contents. THE RED BOOK! Well he knew the character of that singular volume!

"Yes, this will do," said Arthur, as he placed the book under his cloak. "I wanted a pledge,—that is to say, a *sure hold* upon the Madam and her friends. And I have one!"

He took the clergyman by the arm and they went forth together from the private chamber,—the holy place—of the Madam. Went forth together, and descending the stairs, passed in the darkness along the hall. The key was in the lock of the front door. Arthur turned it, and in a moment, they

passed together over the threshold of that mansion of crime, and stood in the light of the wintery stars.

"Who," whispered Arthur, as side by side, and arm in arm, they went down the dark street, "who to see us walk so lovingly together, would imagine the real nature of those relations which bind us together?"

He felt Barnhurst shudder as he held him to his side—

"The red book!" ejaculated the clergyman, with accent hard to define, whether of fear, or wonder, or of horror.

And by the light of the midnight stars, they went down the dark street together.

CHAPTER V.

"WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH HER?"

SCARCELY had the echo of the front door, ceased to resound through the mansion, when the Madam entered the holy place from which Arthur and Herman had just departed. Her step was vigorous and firm, as she crossed the threshold; her face flashed with mingled rage and triumph.

"He will return to-morrow at ten o'clock!" she cried, and burst into a fit of laughter, which shook her voluminous bust—"there's two ways of tellin' that story, my duck." (The Madam, as in all her vivacious moments, grew metaphorical.) "Catch a weasel asleep! Fool who with your tin 'tip'! I guess I haven't been about in the world all this while, to be out-generaled by a snip of a boy like that!"

Louder laughed the Madam, until her bust shook again—and in the midst of her calm enjoyment she saw—the desk and the broken lock. Her laughter stopped abruptly. She darted forward, like a tigress rushing on her prey. She seized the lamp and raised the lid, and saw the contents of the desk,—packages of letters, mysterious instruments and singular vials, all,—all,—save the red book.

The Madam could not believe her eyes. Rapidly she searched the desk, displacing its contents and researching every nook and corner, but her efforts were fruitless. There were packages of letters, mysterious vials, and instruments as mysterious, but,—the red book was not there.

For the first time in her life, the Madam experienced a sensation of fear,—unmingled fear,—and for the first time saw ruin open like a chasm at her very feet. She grew pale, sank helplessly in her arm-chair, and sat there like a statue,—rather like an image of imperfectly finished wax-work,—her visage blank as a sheet of paper.

"Gone,—gone," the words escaped from her lips, "ruined, undone!"

This state of "unmasterly inactivity" continued, however, but for a few moments. All at once she bounded from her chair, and a blasphemous oath escaped—more strictly speaking—shot from her lips. She crossed the floor, with a heavy stride, gave the bell-rope a violent pull, and then, hurrying to the door screamed "Corkins! Corkins!" with all her might.

"Why don't they come! Fools, asses!" and again, she attacked the bell-rope, and again, hurried to the door,—“Corkins, Corkins, I say! Halloo!"

In a few moments Corkins appeared, his spectacles awry and his right-hand laid affectionately upon his "goatee."

"The matter?"

"Don't stand there starin' at me like a stuck-pig!" was the elegant reply of the Madam,—“down into the cellar,—quick,—quick! Tell Slung to come here. Not a word. Go I say!"

She pushed Corkins out of the room. Then pacing up and down the small apartment, she awaited his return with an anxiety and suspense, very much like madness, uttering blasphemous oaths at every step she took.

Footsteps were heard, and at length, Corkins, dressed in sober black, appeared once more, leading Slung—Shot by the hand. The ruffian stumbled into the room, his brutal visage, low forehead, broken nose and elongated jaw, bearing traces of a recent debauch. Folding his brawny arms over his red flannel shirt, he gazed sleepily at the Madam, politely remarking at the same time—

"What de thunder's de muss,—s-a-y?"

"Are you sober?" and the Madam gave Slung a violent shake; "are you awake?"

"Old woman," responded Slung, "you better purceed to bisness, and give us none o' yer jaw. What de yer w-a-n-t? s-a-y!"

The Madam seized him by the arm.

"Two men have just left this house. One wears a cap,—the other, a hat. The one with the cap and cloak is the shortest of the two; and the one with a cap carries under his cloak a book, bound in red morocco, which he has just stolen from yonder desk. D'ye hear? I want you to track him and get back that book at any price; even if you have to—"

"Fech him up wid dis?" and the ruffian drew a "slung-shot" from the sleeve of his right arm.

"Yes, yes; anyhow, or by any means," continued the Madam; "only bring back the book before morning, and a hundred dollars are yours. D'ye hear?"

"A shortish chap with a cap an' cloak," exclaimed Slung; "there's a good many shortish chaps with caps in this 'ere town, old woman."

"I have it! I have it!" cried the Madam; and then she conveyed her instructions to Slung in a slow and measured voice. "Don't you think you'd know him now?" she exclaimed, when her instructions were complete.

"Could pick 'im out among a thousand." And the ruffian closed one eye, and increased the boundless ugliness of his face, by an indescribable grimace.

"Go then,—no time's to be lost,—a hundred dollars, you mind;" and she urged him to the door. He clutched the slung-shot and disappeared.

Corkins approached and looked the Madam in the face.

"The red book gone?" he asked, every line of his visage displaying astonishment and terror.

"Gone," echoed the Madam, "to be sure it is." Our only hope is in that ruffian. One well-planted blow with a slung-shot, will kill the strongest man.

"The red book gone!" Corkins fairly trembled with affright. Staggering like a drunken man, he managed to deposit himself in a chair. He took the gold spectacles from his nose, and wiped them, in an absent way. "Bad," he muttered. Then passing his hand from his "goatee" to his top-knot, and from top-knot to "goatee," again he muttered, "The red book gone! what will become of us?"

"If it is not recovered before morning, we are done for," cried the Madam; "that's all." But this is no time for foolin'? Come, sir! stir your stumps!"

She took the light and led the way upstairs, followed by Corkins, who shook in every fiber; murmuring, at every step, "Gone! gone! The red book gone!"

Entering the passage which led to the chamber of Alice, the Madam paused at the door of that chamber, and pointed to the door of the closet which (you will remember) was buried under the stairway that led to the fourth story.

A faint moan was heard; it came from the chamber of Alice. The Madam did not heed that moan, but opening the closet door, crossed its threshold, followed by Corkins. The light disclosed the details of that small and gloomy place; and glittered brightly upon a mahogany chest or box which rested on the floor. A mahogany box, with surface polished like a mirror, and a shape that told at sight of death and the grave. It was a coffin; and the coffin of that nameless girl who had been removed from the bed, in the adjoining chamber, in order to make room for Alice.

"What,—what—is—to-be—done—with—her?" said Corkins, as he touched the coffin with his foot.

Here, for one moment, while Corkins and the Madam stand beside the coffin, in the lonely closet of the accursed mansion; here, for one moment, turn your gaze away. Look far through the night, and let your gaze rest upon the fireside light of yonder New England home. It is a quiet fireside, in the city of Hartford; and a father and a mother are sitting there, bewailing the singular absence of their only daughter, a beautiful girl, the hope and the light of their home; she strangely disappeared a week ago, and since then, they have heard no signs nor tidings of her fate.

And now they are sitting by their desolate fireside; the father choking down his agony in silent prayer; the mother giving free vent to her anguish in a flood of tears. And the eyes of father and mother turn to the daughter's place by the fireside; it is vacant, and forever. For while they bewail her absence,—while they hope for her return by

morning light,—their daughter rests in the coffin, here, at the feet of Madam Resimer. Weep, fond mother; choke down your agony with silent prayer, brave father: but tears nor prayers can never bring your daughter back again. To-night, she rests in the coffin, at the feet of Madam Resimer; to-morrow night—Look yonder! A learned doctor is lecturing for the instruction of his students, and his “subject” lies on the table before him. That “subject,” (Oh! do you see it, father and mother of the distant New England home,) that “subject” is your only daughter.

Verily, the tragedies of actual, every-day life, are more improbable than the maddest creations of romance.

“What shall we do with *her*?” again exclaimed Corkins, touching the coffin with his foot.

The Madam was troubled. “The red book!” she muttered, in an absent way, “the red book!” Her mind was evidently wandering. “It must be regained at any price.”

“But—this—body,” interrupted Corkins, tapping the coffin with his foot.

“Oh! *this*!” exclaimed the Madam, and a pleasant smile stole over her face.

“Oh! as to *this*! we can easily dispose of it. I tell you, Corkins, we will—”

But she did not tell Corkins. For, from the adjoining room, came a cry, so ringing with the emphasis of mortal agony, that even the Madam was struck with terror, as she heard it.

Without a word, she led Corkins into the chamber of Alice.

CHAPTER VI.

A BRIEF EPISODE.

AWAY from these scenes of darkness and of crime, let us, for a moment, turn aside and dwell, for a little while, on the fireside ray of a quiet home. Yes, leaving Arthur and Herman to pursue their way, let us indulge in a quiet episode:

It is a neat two-storied dwelling, standing apart from the street, somewhere in the upper region of the Empire City. Through the drawn window-curtains, a softened light trembles forth upon the darkness. Gaze through the curtains, and behold the scene

which is disclosed by the mingled light of the open fire, and of the lamp whose beams are softened by a clouded shade.

A young mother sitting beside a cradle, with her baby on her breast, and a flax-haired boy, some three years old, crouching on the stool at her feet. A very beautiful sight,—save in the eyes of old bachelors, for whom this work is not written, and who are affectionately requested to skip this chapter,—a very beautiful sight, save in the eyes of that class of worn-out profligates, who never having had a mother or sister, and having spent their lives in degrading the holiest impulse of our nature, into a bestial appetite, come, at last, to look upon woman as a mere animal; come, at last, to sneer with their colorless lips and lack-luster eyes, at the very idea of a holy chastity, as embodied in the form of a pure woman. Of all the miserable devils, who crawl upon this earth, the most miserable is that lower devil, whose heart is foul with pollution at the very mention of woman. Take my word for it, (and if you look about the world, you'll find it so,) the man who has not, somewhere about his heart, a high, a holy ideal of woman,—an ideal hallowing every part of her being, as mother, sister, wife,—is a vile sort of man, anyhow you choose to look at him; a very vile man, rotten at the heart, and diffusing moral death wherever he goes. Avoid such a man,—not as you would the devil, for the devil is a king to him,—but as you would avoid the last extreme of depravity, loathsome, not only for its wretchedness, but for its utter baseness. It's a good rule to go by,—never trust that man who has a low idea of woman,—trust him not with purse, with confidence, in the street or over your threshold,—trust him not: his influence is poison; and the atmosphere which he carries with him, is that of hell.

It is a quiet room, neatly furnished; a lamp, with a clouded shade, stands on the table; a piano stands in one corner; the portrait of the absent father hangs on the wall; a wood fire burns briskly on the hearth. A very quiet room, full of the atmosphere of home.

The mother is one of those women whose short stature, round development of form and limb, clear complexion and abounding

joyousness of look, seem more lovable in the eyes of a certain portion of the masculine race, than all the stately beauties in the world. Certainly, she was a pretty woman. Her eyes of clear, deep blue, her lips of cherry red, harmonized with the hue of her face, her neck and shoulders,—a hue resembling alabaster, slightly reddened by a glimpse of sunshine. Her hair rich and flowing, was neatly disposed about the round outlines of her young face. And in color, — ah, here's the trouble. I see the curl of your lip and the laugh in your eyes. And in color, her hair was not black, nor golden, nor brown, nor even auburn. Her hair was red. You may laugh if it suits you, but her red-hair became her; and this woman with the red-hair, was one of the prettiest, one of the most lovable women in the world. (Why is it that a certain class of authors, very poverty stricken in the way of ideas, always introduce a red-haired woman in the character of a vixen,—always expect you to laugh at the very mention of red-hair—in fact, invest the capital of what little wit they have, in lamentably funny allusions to red-heads, red-hair, and so forth? Or if they fall in love with a sweet woman, with bright red-hair, why do these authors, when they make sonnets to the object of their choice, persist in calling red-hair by the ambiguous name of *auburn*?)

And thus, in her quiet home, with her baby on her breast and her boy at her knee, sat the beautiful woman, with red hair. Sat there, the very picture of a good mother and a holy wife, lulling her babe to sleep with a verse from some old-fashioned hymn. Somehow this mother, centered thus in her quiet home—the blessing of motherhood around and about her like a baptism,—seems more worthy of reverence and love, than the entire first circle of the opera, blazing with bright diamonds and brighter eyes, on a gala night.

The boy resting one hand on his mother's knee, and looking all the while into her face, asks in his childish tones, "When will father come home?"

"Soon, love, very soon," the mother answers, and resumes the verse of the old hymn.

Now, doesn't it strike you that the husband of such a wife, and the father of

such children must be altogether a good man?

We will see him after awhile, and judge for ourselves.

Meanwhile, sit alone with your children, and watch for his coming,—you, simple hearted woman, that know no higher learning, than the rich intuitions of a mother's love. Your chastity is like a veil of light, making holy the room in which you watch, with your boy at your knee, and your baby on your bosom.

CHAPTER VII.

THROUGH THE SILENT CITY.

It was a strange march which Arthur and Barnhurst, arm in arm, took through the streets of the Empire City.

"I am ready to attend you wherever you go," whispered Arthur, as leaving the den of Madam Resimer, they went down the dark street.

"But, where shall I go?" was the question that troubled Barnhurst. "Home?" He shuddered at the thought. Any place but home! "Can I possibly get rid of him?" Doubtful, exceedingly doubtful; "his arm is too strong, and he has me in his power in every way. But that engagement which I have, to meet a person at the hour of four o'clock, at a peculiar place,—how shall I dispose of it? Shall I fail to keep it, or shall I make this man a witness of it?"

Barnhurst was troubled. He knew not what to do. And so arm in arm, they walked along in silence through a multitude of streets,—streets dark as grave-vaults, and laid out in old times, with a profound contempt of right angles—streets walled in with huge warehouses, above whose lofty roofs, you caught but a glimpse of the midnight stars.

And so passing along, they came at length upon the Battery, and caught the keen blast upon their cheeks, as they wandered among the leafless trees. They heard the roar of the waters, and saw the glorious bay,—dim and vast,—surging sullenly under the broad sky, dark with midnight, and yet, glittering with countless stars. A star-light view of Manhattan bay, from the Battery—it was a sight worth seeing. Herman and Arthur,

standing there alone, looked forth in silence. They could not see each other's faces, but Arthur felt the incessant horror which agitated Barnhurst's arm and Barnhurst heard the groan which seemed wrung from Arthur's very heart.

For a long time there was silence. Flash on, old midnight, in your solemn drapery set with stars,—flash on,—you sparkled thus grandly ten thousand years ago, as you will ten thousand years hence,—what care you for the agony of these two men, who now with widely different feelings, stand awed by your sullen splendor!

"If you've seen enough of this, I guess we'd better go," said Arthur, mildly, "I am ready to follow you wherever you go."

Barnhurst silently moved away from the waters, and as they went among the leafless trees, Dermoyne looked back toward the sounding waves—looked back yearningly as though unwilling to leave the sight of them, something there was so tempting in that sight. One plunge and all is over!

They came upon Broadway. It was between two and three o'clock in the morning. I know of nothing in the world so productive of thought, as a walk along Broadway about three o'clock in the morning. The haunts of traffic are closed: the great artery of the city is silent as death: the mad current of life which whirled along it incessantly a few hours ago, has disappeared; or if there is life upon its broad flag-stones, it is life of a peculiar character, far different from the life of the day. And there it spreads before you, under the midnight stars, its vast extent defined by two lines of light, which, in the far distance melt into one vague mass of brightness. New York is the Empire City of the continent and Broadway is the Empire Street of the world.

If you don't believe it, just walk the length of Broadway on a sunny day, when it is mad with life and motion,—and then walk it, at night, and see the kind of life which creeps over its flag-stones under the light of the stars.

They took their silent march up Broadway.

What's this? A huge pile, surrounded by unsightly scaffolding—a huge Gothic pile, whose foundation is among graves, and whose unfinished spire already seems to touch the

stars? Trinity Church—Trinity Church, fronting Wall street, as though to watch its worshipers, who scour Wall street, six days in the week in search of prey, and on the seventh, come to Trinity to say a rich man's prayer, from a prayer-book bound in gold.

And this, what's this? This creature in woman's attire, who glides along the pavement, now accosting the passer-by in language that sounds on woman's lips, like the accents of Hell,—and now, throwing her vail aside, clasps her hands and looks shudderingly around, as though conscious, that for her, not one heart in all the world, cared one throb! What's this? That is a woman, friend. A father used to hold her on his knees, just after the evening prayer was said—a mother used to bend over her as she slept, and kiss her smiling face, and breathe a mother's blessing over her sinless darling. But, what is she now? What does she here alone, out in the cold, dark night? * * * * She is a tenant of one of the houses owned by Trinity Church. She is out in the cold, dark night,—the poor blasted thing you see her,—seeking, out of the hire of her pollution, to swell the revenues of Trinity Church!

She came toward Arthur and Barnhurst, even as they passed before the portals of the unfinished church.

She laid her hand on Arthur's arm, and said to him, words that need not be written.

Arthur looked long and steadily into her face. It had been very beautiful once, but now there was fever in the flaming eyes, and death in the blue circles beneath them. She had fallen to the lowest deep.

"Look there!" whispered Arthur to Barnhurst, "she was as happy once as Alice, and as pure,—that is, as happy and as pure as Alice before you knew her. What is she now?"

Barnhurst did not reply.

Arthur took a silver dollar from his pocket and gave it to the girl. "Go home," he said, "and God pity you!"

"Home!" she echoed, and took the dollar with an incredulous look, and then uttering a strange mad laugh, she went to spend the dollar,—one-half of it for rum and the other half to pay the rent which she owed to Trinity Church.

(Here it occurs to us, to propose three cheers to good old Trinity Church,—and three more to the Patent Gospel which influences the actions of its venerable corporation. Hip—hip—hurrah! Hur—, but somehow the cheering dies away, when one thinks for a minute of the vast contrast between the Gospel of Trinity Church and the Gospel of the New Testament. I somehow think we won't cheer any more.)

Up Broadway they resumed their march, Herman and Arthur, arm in arm, and silent as the grave. To see them walk so lovingly together, you would have thought them the best friends in the world.

What's yonder light, flashing from the window of the fourth story? The light of a gambling hell, my friend. That light shines upon piles of gold and upon faces haggard with the tortures of the damned.

And these half naked forms, crouching in the doorway of yonder unfinished edifice,—huddling together in their rags, and vainly endeavoring to keep out the winter's cold. Children,—friendless, orphaned children. All day long they roam the streets in search of bread, and at night they sleep together in this luxurious style.

But we have arrived at the Astor and the Park stretches before us, the wind moaning among its leafless trees, and its lights glimmering in a sort of mournful radiance through the gloom. The Park, whose walks by day and night have been the theater of more tragedies of real life,—more harrowing agony, hopeless misery, starving despair,—than you could chronicle in the compass of a thousand volumes. Could these flagstones speak, how many histories might they tell—histories of those, who, mad with the last anguish of despair, have paced these walks at dead of night, hesitating between crime and suicide, between the knife of the assassin and the last plunge of the self murderer!

But at this moment shouts of drunken mirth are heard, opposite the Astor. Some twenty gay young gentlemen, attired in opera uniform,—black dress-coat, white vest, white kid gloves,—and fragrant at once of champagne and cologne, have formed a circle around the ancient pump, which stands near the Park gate. These gay young gentlemen, after two hours' painful endurance of that

refinement of torture, known as the Italian Opera, have been making a tour of philosophical observation through the town; they have carried on a brisk crusade against the watchmen; have drank much champagne at a "crack" hotel; have tarried awhile in the aristocratic resort of Mr. Peter Williams, which, as you doubtless know, gives tone and character to the classic region of the Five Points; and now encircling the pump, they listen to the eloquent remarks of one of their number, who is interrupted now and then by rounds of enthusiastic applause. Very much inebriated, he is seated astride of the pump, which his vivid imagination transforms into a blooded racer—

"Gentlemen," he says, blandly and with a pardonable thickness of utterance, "if my remarks should seem confused, attribute it to my position; I am not accustomed to public speaking on horseback. But, as Congress is now in session, I deem it a duty which I owe to my constituents, to give my views on—on—the great Bill for the Protection of—"

"Huckleberries!" suggested a voice.

"Thank the gentleman from Ann-street," continued the speaker, in true parliamentary style, as he swayed to and fro, on top of the pump; "of the great Bill for the Protection of Huckleberries!" Now, gentlemen," he continued, suddenly forgetting his huckleberries, "you know they beat Henry Clay this time by their infernal cry of Texas and Oregon; you know it!"

There was a frightful chorus, "We do! we do!"

"You know how bad we felt when we crossed Cayuga bridge,—Polk on top, and Clay under,—but, gentlemen, I have a cry for 1848 that will knock their daylight out of 'em. They shouted Texas and Oregon, and licked us; but in 1848 we'll give 'em fits with Clay and—JAPAN!"

"Clay and JAPAN!" was the chorus of the twenty young gentlemen.

"There's a platform for you, gentlemen! Clay and Japan! We'll give 'em annexation up to their eyes. Consider, gentlemen, the advantages of Japan! Separated from the continent by a trifling slip of water, known as the Pacific ocean, Japan may be considered in the light of a near neighbor.

And then what a delicious campaign we can make, with Japan on our banner! Nobody knows anything about her, and we can lie as we please, without the most remote danger of being found out. Is n't there something heart-stirring in the very word, JA-PAN? And then, gentlemen, we'll have 'em; for Japan aint committed to any of the leading questions of the day, and we can make all sorts o' pledges to everybody, and—"

The orator, in his excitement, swayed too much to one side, and fell languidly from the pump into the arms of his enthusiastic friends; and, with three cheers for "Clay and Japan," the party of twenty young gentlemen went, in a staggering column, to a neighboring *restaurant*, where—it is presumable—a few bottles more put them, not only into the humor of annexing Japan, but all Asia in the bargain. Arthur and Barnhurst had observed this scene from the steps of the Astor.

"Do you know this is very absurd?" said Barnhurst, pettishly—"this walking about town all night?"

"Do you think so?" responded Dermoyne. "Then why don't you go home?"

Home! Barnhurst shuddered at the thought. Home! Anything, anything but that!

There was something, too, in the singular gayety of Arthur's tone, which struck him with more terror than the most boisterous threat. Underneath this gayety, like floods of burning lava beneath a morning mist, there rolled and swelled a tide of unfathomable emotion.

"Let us walk on," said Barnhurst, faintly; and they walked on, arm in arm—the false clergyman with the very terror of death in his heart—the poor mechanic with a face immovably calm, but with the fire of an irrevocable resolution in his eyes. They walked on: up Broadway, and into the region where sits the sullen Tombs, and through the maze of streets, where vice and equalor, drunkenness and crime, hold their grotesque revel all night long. Through the Five Points they walked, confronted at every step by a desperate or abandoned wretch, their ears filled with the cries of blasphemy, starvation and mirth,—mirth, that was very much like the joy of nether-

most hell. Into Chatham street they walked, and up the Bowery, and once more across into Broadway, where the delicate outlines of Grace Church, with its fairy-like sculpture work, were dimly visible in the night. Toward the North River, and through narrow alleys, where human beings were herded together in the last extreme of misery, they walked; and then into broad streets, whose splendid mansions, dark without from pavement to roof, were bright within with rich men's revels,—revels, drunken and foul beyond the blush of shame.

It was a strange, sad march, which they took in the silent night, through the vast Empire City.

And at every step Arthur gathered the Red Book closer to his side.

And behind them, in all their march, even from the moment when they left the Battery, two figures followed closely in their wake—unseen by Arthur or by Barnhurst,—two figures, tracking every step of their way with all a bloodhound's stealth and zeal.

CHAPTER VIII.

TRINITY CHURCH.

At length—it was near the hour of four—they came to the head of Wall street once more, and paused in front of the portals of unfinished Trinity.

"Here you must leave me," cried Barnhurst, in a tone of desperation, "I have an appointment in this church at the hour of four. Leave me,—at least for a little while—"

But Arthur held fast the false clergyman's arm.

"I will never leave you," he said. "Keep your appointment, I will witness it. It will be very interesting to know what business it is, that can bring you to this unfinished church at the hour of four in the morning."

Barnhurst set his teeth together in silent rage.

"You cannot,—cannot,—" he began.

"Not a word," sternly interrupted Dermoyne. "Go in and keep your appointment like a man of your word."

Barnhurst led the way, and they passed under heavy piles of scaffolding into the dark church. Dark indeed, and unenlivened

by a single ray of light. All around was silent as the grave. The profound stillness was well calculated to strike the heart with awe, and Arthur and Barnhurst, as they groped their way along, did not utter a word.

"Here, near the third pillar, I am to meet him," whispered Barnhurst.

"Give me your left hand, then; I will conceal myself behind the pillar, and hold you firmly, while you converse with your friend."

Herman, in the thick darkness, placed himself against the pillar, and Dermoyne, firmly grasping his left hand, crept behind it.

Thus they stood for many minutes, awaiting the approach of Herman's friend. In the dark and stillness those moments seemed so many ages.

A bell, striking the hour of four, resounded over the city.

At length a step was heard, and then a faint cough,—

"Are you here?" said a voice; and Dermoyne, from his place of concealment, beheld a dimly-defined figure approach the third pillar.

"I am," answered Barnhurst.

"Who are you?" said the voice of the unknown.

"I am Herman Barnhurst."—His voice was low but distinct.

"How shall I know that you are the Barnhurst whom I seek?" asked the unknown.

There was a pause. Barnhurst seemed to hesitate:

"*The Night of the Tenth of November, 1842,*" he said, and his voice trembled.

"Right; you are the man," said the unknown. "Did you receive a letter last evening?"

"I did,"—and Barnhurst's voice was very faint.

"How was that letter signed, and to what did it refer?"

Again Barnhurst hesitated. Arthur felt the hand which he held grow hot and cold by turns.

"It was signed by 'THE THREE,'" he replied in a faltering voice—"and referred to an event which *it assumes* took place on the night of the tenth of November, 1842."

"*'Assumes!'*" echoed the unknown, with a faint laugh. "You think it an *assumption*, do you? Well, I like that. And the letter requested you to meet one of the 'Three,' at this place, at the hour of four this morning; and it concluded by stating that you would hear something of great interest to yourself in regard to the *events of that night.*"

"It did," faintly responded Barnhurst. "I am here, and—"

"We will have a little private conversation together. First of all, you must know that I am one of three persons who take a great interest in your affairs, and desire to save you from a great deal of trouble. We watch over you with fraternal anxiety, and do all we can to keep you out of harm. And on the part of the Three, (whose names you will know in good time, in case you prove reasonable,) I am deputed to give you a little good counsel."

"Good counsel?"

"Good counsel, was the word. Now, in order to understand this good counsel, you will understand that the Three are in possession of all the facts connected with the remarkable event of the *night of the tenth of November, 1842.* Facts, certified by proof—you comprehend?"

Herman gave a start, but did not reply.

"You will, therefore, listen to the good counsel with patience, I doubt not. To come to the point, then:—You know that the immense property of Trinity Church, comprising, at a rough guess, one eighth of the greatest city on the American continent, has been threatened at various periods by a series of conspiracies, who have given THE CORPORATION much trouble, and who, more than once, have nearly accomplished its ruin?"

"I do," answered Herman; "and these conspiracies have all sprung from a band of persons, widely dispersed through the United States, and calling themselves the heirs of Anreke Jans Bogardus."

"Right," continued the unknown. "Anreke Jans, said to be the natural daughter of a king of Holland, lived on this island about two hundred years ago. At her death she bequeathed to her children a certain farm—a farm which at the present time forms the very heart of New York, and constitutes a

great part of the wealth of Trinity Church, for it is worth countless millions of dollars. Now you are well aware that it is alleged by the descendants of Anreke Jans, that this farm was juggled out of the hands of one of their ancestors by a gross fraud—a fraud worthy of that curse which Scripture pronounces upon the man who removes his neighbor's land-mark—and that Trinity Church has only one right to the ownership of said farm, to wit: the right of the thief and robber?"

"I am aware of this," responded Herman; "and so powerful have been the proofs of this fraud, that the Church has, on various occasions, come near losing the very jewel of all its immense possessions. Only one course of action has saved it from the heirs of Anreke Jans Bogardus—"

"It has, when nearly driven to the wall, consented to compromise with the heirs for their claim,—has simply desired in return, a release, signed by all the heirs,—and then, on the very eve of settlement, it has managed to buy off one or two of the most prominent heirs. For instance, Aaron Burr, (who acted for the heirs, some thirty years ago,) was lulled into silence by the generosity of the Church. She gave him several valuable tracts of land, which he sold to Astor—"

The unknown paused for a moment, and then resumed:

"At the present time, these heirs are preparing a conspiracy, more desperately energetic than any previous effort. It is certainly the interest of the Church to foil this conspiracy at all hazards. And we 'THREE' persons, not directly connected with the corporation, think that we can make it our interest to assist the Church in the final overthrow of the conspirators. To do this effectually, we require the assistance of one of the heirs, who will wind himself into the plans of the conspirators, help the plot to ripen, and help us to *gather it* when it is ripe."

"One of the heirs?" muttered Herman.

"Ay, one of the heirs,—and he must be a man of sense, shrewdness and undoubted respectability. Now—do you hear me?—you, Herman Barnhurst, are one of the heirs of Anreke Jans Bogardus."

There was a pause of profound silence.

You might have heard a pin drop, in the deep stillness of that vast edifice.

"I am one of the heirs of Anreke Jans," said Herman; "and what then?"

The voice of the unknown was deep, distinct and imperative:

"You will assist us in foiling these conspirators. You will assist us willingly, faithfully, and without reserve. This is the good counsel which I am deputed to give you."

"And if I decline?" said Herman, drawing a long breath.

"You will not decline when you remember the event of the night of the tenth of November, 1842."

Dermoyne felt the hand which he clasped tremble in his grasp.

"Ah!" and Herman drew another long breath.

"As the Third of the Three, I beg your opinion of my good counsel," said the unknown.

"I accept," said Herman, in a husky voice.

"But we must have some pledge for your fidelity—"

"Have you not pledge enough," said Herman, bitterly, "if you know the events of that night—"

"True; but we require some other little pledge in the way of collateral—as the money lenders say"—said the unknown, who had designated himself as "THE THIRD of the Three." "In the event of a certain contingency—a very improbable contingency,—you will inherit one seventh of the Van Huyden estate—"

Herman gave a start;—he moved forward suddenly, but was drawn back against the pillar by the strong grip of Dermoyne:

"The Van Huyden estate!" he ejaculated in a tone of utter astonishment.

"I said the Van Huyden estate," continued the Third of the Three,—and that should satisfy you that I know all about it. In witness of your good faith, you will to-morrow make over to us, by our own proper names, and over your own proper signature, all your right, title and interest in the Van Huyden estate. The final settlement, you know, takes place the day after to-morrow. In case you act faithfully to us,

we will restore you your right on the day when, by your assistance, we have foiled the heirs of Anreke Jans. The good counsel which I have for you is this:—accept this proposition at once, if you know what is good for your health, your reputation, your liberty."

"The words of the Third of the Three were succeeded by a dead pause. It was dark, and the changes of Herman's face could not be seen. A sound was heard, like a half-suppressed groan.

"And if I refuse?" he faltered—"if I cast your absurd proposition to the winds?"

"Then the *revelation* of the event of that night, may cast you to the devil," was the calm reply.

"At least give me some hours for reflection; let me consider your proposal."

"We had thought of this," answered the unknown. "The time is short. The 25th of December will soon be here. I am authorized to give you until to-day at mid-day,—that is, you have nearly eight hours for calm reflection."

Herman said, after a moment's hesitation, in a low and scarce perceptible voice,—

"Be it so."

"In case your answer is Yes, you will signify it in this manner"—and he whispered in the ear of his victim,—whispered a few brief words, which Herman drank in with all his soul. "Remember, before mid-day, some seven and a half hours hence."

"You shall have my answer in the manner specified," said Herman, in an accent of utter bewilderment.

"Our interview is at an end," said the Third of the Three. "As we must not by any chance be seen leaving this place together, I will pass through the grave-yard, while you go out at the main door. Good night."

And leaving the miserable man, who sank back against the pillar for support, the Third of the Three passed from the shadows, out into the graveyard, where white tombstones appeared in the starlight, mingled with piles of lumber and heaps of building stone.

As he came into the starlight, it might be seen that he was a short thick-set man, clad in a dark over-coat, whose upturned collar hid the low part of his visage, while his hat,

drawn low over his brows, masked the upper portion of his face. He chuckled to himself as he picked his way among the heaps of lumber and scattered masses of building stone:

"It is a nice game, any how you choose to look at it. The heirs of Anreke Jans can be played against the Church; this man Herman can be played against the heirs, and the Three can dictate terms to both parties, and decide the game. And when the Three have won, why then the Third of the Three can hold the First and Second in his power; especially, if this man's chance of the seventh of the Van Huyden estate is transferred to the Third, by his own proper name. Well, well; law, properly understood, is the science of pulling wool over other people's eyes: eloquent speeches in court, and the name of a big practice, may do for some people; but give me one of these nice little cases, which lie sequestered from the public view, quiet as an oyster in his bed, and as juicy!"

Thus you see that the Third of the Three was a philosopher. He paused before a marble slab, over which he bent, tracing with difficulty the inscription, which was in quaint characters, much worn by time—"VAN HUYDEN."

"Strange enough! Just as we were about to search the tomb last night,* to be interrupted and scared from our object by a circumstance so unusual! The snug sum of \$200,000, in plate, buried in a coffin!—an odd kind of sub-treasury! Wonder if there's any truth in the legend?"

As the gentleman thus soliloquized he fixed his eyes attentively upon the slab; but he did not see the approach of a man, wrapped in the thick folds of a cloak, and with a broad-brimmed hat over his brow,—a man who came noiselessly from the shadows and took his place at the opposite extremity of the slab, quietly folding his arms, as he fixed his gaze upon the Third of the Three.

A wild sort of picture this: The gloomy church-yard, with its leafless trees, and tombstones half hidden among heaps of timber and of stone. Yonder, the church, looking like the grotesque creation of an enchanter's

* See Episode, page 114 of the Empire City.

power, as hidden among uncouth scaffolding, it rises vague and shapeless into the sky. And here, by the tomb of the Van Huydens, two figures,—the Third of Three, who, in a deep reverie, fixes his eyes upon the inscription—and the cloaked figure, whose steady gaze is centered upon the absent-minded gentleman.

"Two hundred thousand buried in a coffin,"—soliloquized "the Third,"—"I wonder if I could not make a little search. The place is quiet,—no watchman near—"

"Liar!" said a voice, in tones deep as the sound of an organ. "Learn that the Watcher always guards the vault of the Van Huydens:—learn that it is sacrilege to rob the dead."

CHAPTER IX.

THE END OF THE MARCH.

As Dermoyne led Barnhurst forth into the open air, the false clergyman staggered like a drunken man. His tall and angular form shook like a reed; and Arthur, catching a glimpse of his countenance, saw that it was livid and distorted in every feature.

"Do with me what you will," he said in broken accents. "The worst has come.—I do not care! Come; at last, you shall go home with me. Home!"

He turned his steps up Broadway, leaning his weight on Arthur's arm as he staggered along.

Terrible as had been the crimes of the wretch, Arthur pitied him. For a moment, only; for the dying cry of Alice was in his ear.

"Your punishment begins," he whispered.

And thus, up Broadway, they resumed their march through the city.

They had not gone many paces from the church, when two forms sprang suddenly from the shadows of the scaffolding, both clad in dark overcoats, with caps drawn over their faces. They were the forms of those unknown persons who had followed Arthur and Barnhurst from the Battery over the city. One was lean, tall and sinewy in form; his quick, active, stealthy step, resembled the step of an Indian. The other was short and thick set, with broad chest and bow legs.

"Did yer see der Red Book, Dirk?"

"O' coss I did; as he come out o' der church, his cloak opened, and I seed 'um under his arm. O' coss I did, Slung."

We cannot give any just idea of the peculiar *patois* of these delightful specimens of the civilized savages.

"Travel's der word," said Slung.

"O' coss it is: an' if we ketch 'um in a dark alley, or round a sharp corner, wont we smash his daylights in!"

And the one with his hand on his knife, concealed in the pocket of his overcoat, and the other with the cord of the slung-shot wound about his wrist, they resumed their hunt in the track of Dermoyne.

Unconscious of the danger which strode stealthily in his wake, Dermoyne clasped the Red Book to his side with one arm, and with the other supported the form of the trembling Barnhurst.

"Yes, we'll go home," muttered the false clergyman—"Home!" He pronounced the word with a singular emphasis, like a man half bereft of his senses. "You can work your vengeance on me there, for the worst has come."

Then, for a long time, they pursued their way in silence, turning toward the East River, as they drew near the head of Broadway.

As he drew near his destination—near the end of his singular march,—a wild hope agitated the heart of the wretched man, half stupefied as he was by despair. It was his last hope.

"This man has feeling," he thought, "and I will try him."

They stood, at length, in the hall of a quiet mansion, the hanging lamp above their heads shedding its waving light into their faces. Barnhurst had entered the door by a night key, forgetting, in his agitation, to close it after him. Arthur dropped his arm, and they confronted each other, surveying each other's faces for the first time in four long hours.

It was a singular sight. Both lividly pale, and with the fire of widely contrasted emotions, giving new fire to their gaze, they silently regarded each other. The tall and angular form of the clergyman was in contrast with the compact figure of the mechanic: and Herman's visage, singular

eyes, aquiline nose, bland complexion, and hair sleekly disposed behind the ears, was altogether different from the face of the mechanic:—bold forehead, surmounted by masses of brown hair, short and curling—clear gray eyes, wide mouth, with firm lips, and round and massive chin; you might read the vast difference between their minds in their widely contrasted faces.

"Well, I am—home," said Barnhurst, with a smile hard to define.

"I will sleep in your room," answered Arthur, quietly. "To-morrow, at ten, we go together to that house."

"Let us retire, then," answered Herman. The hanging lamp lighted the stairway, and disclosed the door at its head.

Herman, with the hand of Arthur on his arm, led the way up the staircase, and paused for a moment at the door. He bent his head as if to listen for the echo of a sound, but no sound was heard. Herman gently opened the door, and entered—followed by Arthur—a spacious chamber, dimly lighted by a taper on the mantle.

"Hush!" said Herman, and pointed to a small couch, on which a boy of some three years was sleeping; his rosy face, ruffled by a smile, and his hair lying in thick curls all about his snow-white forehead.

"Hush!" again said Herman, and pointed to a curtained bed. A beautiful woman was sleeping there, with her sleeping infant cradled on her arm. The faces of the mother and babe, laid close together on the pillow,

looked very beautiful—almost holy—in the soft mysterious light.

"My wife! my children!" gasped Herman. As he spoke, the agitation of his face was horrible to look upon.

Dermoyne felt his heart leap to his throat. He could not convince himself that it was not a dream. Again and again he turned from the face of Barnhurst to the rosy boy on the couch—to the beautiful mother and her babe, resting there in the half-broken shadows of the curtained bed,—and felt his knees tremble and his heart leap to his throat.

And in contrast with this scene of holy peace,—a pure mother, sleeping in the marriage chamber with her children,—came up before him, Alice, and her bed of torture in the den of Madam Resimer.

"This,—this," gasped Barnhurst, "this is why I couldn't marry Alice!"

Arthur was convulsed by opposing emotions.

"Devil!" he uttered with set teeth and clenched hands,—“and with a wife and children like these, you could still plot the ruin of poor Alice!”

"Husband," said the wife, as she awoke from her sleep—"have you come at last? I waited for you so long!"

Leave we this scene, and retrace our steps. The revel in *THE TEMPLE* is at the highest. The masks begin to fall. Hark! to the whispers which mingle softly with the clinking of champagne glasses. By all means let us enter *THE TEMPLE*.

NEW YORK :

ITS

UPPER-TEN AND LOWER MILLION.

PART FOURTH.

IN THE TEMPLE.

FROM MIDNIGHT UNTIL DAWN.

DECEMBER 24, 1844.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE TEMPLE—THE CENTRAL CHAMBER.

It was two o'clock on the morning of the 24th of December, 1844, when Frank led Nameless over the threshold of a magnificent but dimly-lighted hall.

Attired in black velvet, the golden cross upon her breast, and with a white vail falling like a snowflake over her face and raven hair, she pressed his hand and led him forward to the light. You cannot, by the changes of his countenance, trace the emotions now busy at his heart; for his face is concealed by a mask; a cap, with a drooping plume, shades his brow; his form is attired in a tunic of black velvet, gathered to his waist by a scarlet sash; a falling collar discloses his throat; and there is a white cross upon his breast, suspended from his neck by a golden chain. His brown hair, no longer wild and matted, but carefully arranged by a woman's hand, falls in glossy masses to his shoulders.

"Stand here, my knight of the white cross, and observe some of the mysteries of our Temple."

For a moment she raised her vail, and her dark eyes emitted rays of magnetic fire, and the pressure of her hand made the blood bound in every vein.

They stood by a marble pillar, near a table on which was placed a lamp with a clouded shade,—a table loaded with fruits and flowers, with goblets and with bottles of rich old wine.

Nameless could not repress an ejaculation as he surveyed the scene.

"I am in a dream!" he said.

A vast and dimly-lighted hall, broken by a range of marble columns; pictures and mirrors flashing and glowing along the lofty walls; and the very air imbued with the breath of summer, the fragrance of freshly gathered flowers. Near every column was placed a table, covered with fruit and flowers, with goblets and bottles of rich old wine; and on every table, a lamp with a clouded shade shed around a light at once dim, mysterious and voluptuous. And the mirrors reflected the scene, amid whose silent magnificence Frank and Nameless stood alone.

"Not in a dream, but in the central chamber of the Temple," she whispered. "Here, shut out from the world by thick walls, the guests of the Temple assemble at dead of night, and create for themselves a sort of fairy world, far different from the world which you see at the church or opera, or even on Broadway on a sunshiny day.

There was a touch of mockery in her tone as she spoke.

"But do not these guests, as you call them, know each other?" whispered Nameless. "Do not those who mingle in the orgie of the night, recognize each other when they meet by daylight?"

"Every aristocratic gentleman knows the aristocratic lady, who meets him within these walls," replied Frank. "Beyond that nothing is known. A mask, a convenient costume, hides ever face and form. They all, however, know the Queen of the Temple,"—she placed her hand upon her breast; "and the password, without which no one

can cross the threshold of this house, is issued by the Queen of the Temple."

"Queen of the Temple?" echoed Nameless.

"Yes, Queen of the Temple! A Queen who rules by midnight—and the temple of whose power,—gay, voluptuous, flower-crowned, as you see it,—is founded upon pollution and death."

She paused; and Nameless saw her bosom heave, and heard the sigh which escaped from her lips.

"But this night past, you will bid adieu to scenes like this forever?" whispered Nameless. "You remember your pledge?"

She gently raised the veil; her countenance, in all its impassioned loveliness, lay open to his gaze. Her eyes flashed brightly, vividly, although wet with tears.

"Yes," she responded in a whisper. "This night past, I will bid adieu to scenes like this forever!" and she drew him gently to her bosom.—"Your life has been dark—mine dark and criminal. But there is hope for us, Gulian—hope beyond these walls, where pollution is masked in flowers,—hope in some far distant scene, where, unclogged by the dark memories of the past, we will begin life anew, and seek the blessing of God, in a career of faith, of self-denial!"

"And then, Frank," said Nameless,— "should wealth ever be ours, we will devote it to the redemption of those who have suffered like us, and like us fallen."

At this moment, a burst of music, from an adjoining chamber, floated through the vast and shadowy hall. And then the sound of dancing, mingled with the music—and now and then the music and the dance were interrupted by the echo of joyous voices.

"The guests of the Temple' are dancing in the Banquet Chamber," said Frank. "Masked and veiled, shut out from the world by impenetrable walls, they are commencing one of those orgies, which awoke the echoes of the Vatican, in the days of Pope Borgia."

A curtain was thrust aside,—a momentary blaze of light rushed into the vast hall,—and masked and veiled, the "guests of the Temple" came pouring into the palace.

"Stand here and observe them," whispered Frank.

"A strange and motley throng!" returned Nameless, in a whisper. "Are we indeed in New York, in the nineteenth century?—or is it in Rome, in the days of the Borgias?"

And for a few moments, he stood side by side with Frank, in the shadow of the central pillar, watching the scene in dumb amazement. Walking, two by two—some forty men and women in all—the guests glided through the voluptuous light—and shadow, no less voluptuous—of the central chamber. It was, indeed, a strange and motley crowd! Popes and cardinals, and monks and nuns, mingled with knights, caliphs and dancing girls. The effect of their rich and varied costumes, deepened by the soft light, was impressive, dazzling. A pope led a dancing girl by the hand—a christian knight encircled the slender waist of a houri, a stately cardinal discoursed in low tones with a staid quakeress, whose enticing form lost none of its charms in her severely neat attire; and the grand Caliph Haroun Alraschid, unawed by the precepts of the prophet, supported a veiled abbess, on his royal arm. Contrasts like these glided among the pillars—now in light, now in shadow; echoes of softly whispered conversation filled the hall with a musical murmur; and the mirrors along the walls reflected the pictures—the tables, loaded with viands and flowers—the rich variety of costume—the pillars of white marble—the light and shadow, which gave new witchery to the scene.

There were certain of the maskers who, in an especial manner, riveted the attention of Nameless.

A man of stately presence and royal stride, attired in a tunic of purple silk, with an outer tunic of scarlet velvet, edged with white ermine—hose, also of scarlet—and shoes fastened with diamond buckles. Even had the mask failed to hide his face, it would have been concealed by the cluster of snowy plumes which nodded from his jeweled coronet.

"Behold Roderick Borgia!" whispered Frank, as the masked passed along with his stately stride.

"And the lady who leans upon his arm?"

"Lucretia Borgia!"

Lucretia was masked, but the mask which hid the beauty of her face, could not conceal the richness of her dark hair, which contrasted so vividly with the whiteness of her neck and shoulders. A single lily bloomed in solitary loveliness in the blackness of her hair; her form was encased in a white robe, which adapting itself in easy folds to the shape of her noble bust, is girded lightly to her waist by a scarlet scarf. From the wide sleeve, (edged like the skirt with scarlet), you catch a glimpse of a magnificent hand and arm.

"Worthy, my dear Lucretia, to rule hearts by your beauty and empires by your intellect!" said Roderick.

"Ah, your holiness flatters," was the whispered reply.

"Her shape, indeed, is worthy of Lucretia Borgia," said Frank, as Roderick Borgia and his daughter passed by the central pillar, and disappeared in the shadows.

"Does she inherit the morals as well as the beauty of the woman-fiend whose name she bears?"

Ere Frank could reply, another couple, arm in arm, approached the central pillar. A bulky cardinal in a scarlet hat and robe, holding by the arm a slender youth attired in modern style, in frock coat and trowsers of blue cloth,—the trowsers displaying limbs of unrivaled symmetry, and the frock coat buttoned to the throat over an all too-prominent bust. The cardinal wore a golden cross on his brawny chest, and the brown hair of the slender-waisted youth was gathered neatly beneath a velvet cap, surmounted by a single snowy plume. It was pleasant to note the affection which existed between the grave cardinal and his youthful friend! Not satisfied with suffering the head of the graceful boy to repose on his shoulder, the cardinal encircled that slender waist with his flowing scarlet sleeve! And thus whispering softly—

"Dearest Julia!" said the cardinal, "what think you of that doctrinal point?"

"Dearest doctor! what if my husband knew?" softly replied the youth.

They passed by the central pillar, from the light into the shadow.

"How name you these?" asked Nameless.

"Leo, the Tenth, and his nephew," was

the answer of Frank,—*"but see here! A monk and nun!"*

The monk was tall; his hood and robe fashioned of white cloth bordered with red; the hood concealed his face, and the robe fell in easy folds from his shoulders to his sandaled feet. The nun was attired in a hood and robe of snow-white satin; the hood concealed her face and locks of gold; but the robe, although loose and flowing, could not conceal the rounded outlines of her shape. Her naked feet were encased in delicate slippers of white satin. And clinging with both hands to the arm of the White Monk, the White Nun went by.

"Beverly, are you sure?" Nameless heard her whisper.

"Sure?" replied the White Monk, in a tone that rose above a whisper,—*"He is false—false—you have the proofs!"* And they went from the light into the gloom.

"She trembles, and her voice falters," said Frank, observing the form of the retiring nun.

"Did she not say *Beverly*?" asked Nameless, a tide of recollections rushing upon his brain. "That name—surely I heard it,—"

"Look!" interrupted Frank, pressing his arm,—*"An oddly assorted couple as ever went arm in arm."*

And a little Turk, dressed in a scarlet jacket and blue trowsers, with an enormous turban on his head, approached the central pillar, leaning on the arm,—nay, clutching the hand of a tall lady, whose face and form were completely concealed by an unsightly robe of black muslin; a garment which seemed to have been assumed, not so much for the sake of ornament, as for disguise. Gathering the robe across her head and face with one hand, she glided along; her other hand,—apparently not altogether to her liking,—grasped by her singular companion. As the *"Lady in Black"* passed by, Nameless heard these words,—

"Havana! A most delightful residence," whispered the Turk.

The *"Lady in Black"* made no reply,—did not even bend her head; but passed along, her robe brushing the tunic of Nameless, as she glided from view.

Why was it that through every nerve, Nameless felt a sensation which cannot be

described, but which one cannot feel but once in a lifetime,—and once felt, thrilling from heart to brain, from brain to the remotest fiber of being, can never be forgotten? A sensation, as though the hand of one long since dead, had touched his cheek, as though the presence of one long since given to the grave, had come to him and *overshadowed* him?

"Who is that lady?" he whispered,—resting one hand against the pillar, for a sudden faintness seized him,—“That lady who is matched with a companion so grotesque?”

"She may be young or old, fair or hideous, but her name I cannot tell," responded Frank. "As for her companion,—the diminutive Turk who clutches her hand, and to whose soft pleadings she does not seem to listen with the most affectionate interest,—his name is ——" Frank bent her mouth close to the ear of Nameless.

"His name?" he interrupted.

"Is one which cannot but excite bitter memories. Israel Yorke, the Financier!"

At that name, linked with the events of the previous night, and with the somber memories of other years, Nameless started, and an ejaculation escaped his lips.

"Israel Yorke! and in this place?"

"Yes,—and why not?" responded Frank, bitterly. "What place so fitting for the swindler,—pardon me, *Financier*? Is it not well that the money which by day is wrung from the hard earnings of the poor, should be spent at night in debauchery and pollution?"

"*From the bank to the brothel*," thought Nameless, but he did not breathe that thought aloud.

Frank silently took him by the hand, and lifted her veil. There was a magic in the pressure and the look. Holding the veil in such a manner that he might gaze freely upon her countenance, while it was hidden from all other eyes, she looked at him long and steadfastly.

"Do you regret your pledge?" she said, measuring every word.

"Regret!" he echoed,—for the touch, the look, the voluptuous atmosphere of her very presence, made him forget the past, the prospects of the future,—everything, but the woman whose soul shone upon him from

her passionate eyes:—"Can you think it? Regret! Never!"

"Then this is my last night in the Temple. O, my heart, my soul is sick of scenes like these!" She glanced around the hall, crowded by the maskers,—“*To-morrow*,—” bending gently to him, until he felt her breath upon his cheek, “*to-morrow*,—”

"*To-morrow*!" echoed a strange voice; "but, my lady, I have a word to say to you *to-night*."

They turned with the same impulse, and beheld the unbidden speaker, in the form of a Spanish hidalgo, dressed in black velvet, richly embroidered with gold. He held his mask before his face, and a group of dark plumes shaded his brow.

She started at the voice, and Nameless felt her hand tremble in his own.

"In a moment I will join you again," she whispered to Nameless; "now, Count, I am at your service."

And leaving Nameless by the pillar, she took the Count by the arm, and with him disappeared in the shadows of the hall.

Leaning against the pillar, and folding his arms across his breast,—over the white cross which glittered there,—Nameless awaited her return with evident anxiety. He was devoured by contending emotions. The fascination with which this beautiful woman had enveloped him,—suspicion of the stranger who had called her from his side,—the strange and varied scene before him,—these occupied him by turns; and then, even amid the excitement and fascination of the present, some faces of the past looked vividly in upon his soul!

And while a scene is transpiring between Frank and the Count, which will hereafter have a strong influence upon the fate of Nameless, let us, for an instant, stand with him by the central pillar, and gaze upon the mysterious hall.

Mild lights, rich shadows, the ceiling supported by marble pillars, the maskers in their contrasted costumes, and the mirrors reflecting all. The stately Roderick and the enticing Lucretia are conversing earnestly in yonder recess,—the White Monk and the White Nun stand face to face near yonder pillar, her lip pressing the champagne glass offered by his hand,—Leo the Tenth, paces

slowly from the middle of the hall to the mirror and back again, the head of his beloved nephew on his shoulder, *her* waist encircled by his arm; and yonder, apart from all others, stands the Lady in Black, with her diminutive lover, even the Turk, kneeling at her feet. Nameless observes all these with an especial interest. As for the rest, there is a Pope sharing an orange with a dancing-girl, a Knight halving a bunch of grapes with a houri, a Cardinal taking wine with a Quakeress; and the saintly Abbess, yonder, is teaching the grave Haroun Alraschid how to eat a "philopœna!"

"Truly, my life is one of adventure!" muttered Nameless, observing the fantastic scene. "Last night, arrested as a thief,—a few nights since the tenant of a mad-house, and to-night in a scene like this! To-morrow night *what* and *where*?"

To-morrow night!

Meanwhile, in a dark recess, whose mirror scarce reflected a single ray, Frank, trembling and agitated, stood face to face with the Count. His mask was laid aside, and in the dim light she saw his face stamped with an unusual energy.

"You wish to speak to me?" she said.

"An hour ago I came to this house,—entered your chamber unsummoned, and to my utter surprise found this young man there. I overheard the pledge which you exchanged; and now let us have a fair understanding. Has he promised,—has he plighted his word? Have you accepted him?" Thus spoke the Count, in a low voice.

"He has, father," replied Frank; "and I have accepted him."

"When and where?" asked the Count, or Col. Tarleton, as you please.

"As soon as I leave this place, and am the tenant of a *home*," replied Frank, her voice trembling on that word, so new to her—"home!"

"Daughter," said Tarleton, and his voice was deep and husky, indicating powerful emotion, "I have a few words to say to you; you will do well to heed them. The drama of twenty-one years draws to a close. The termination of the fifth act will decide my fate and yours. This *boy* is now almost the only obstacle between myself and my brother's unbounded wealth, and between you and

the position of a respected, if not virtuous, woman. And this boy, mark you, shall not leave this house save as your husband. I swear it! Do you hear me,—"

His voice grew thicker, huskier,—he seized her by the wrist.

"Father!" she gasped, as though her proud spirit was cowed by the ferocious determination of his manner.

"He shall not leave this house save as your husband. You say that he is fascinated with you, and you, at first sight, with him. Well! He has seventy-one thousand dollars now in his possession, (no matter how gained), and on the 25th of December, that is, to-morrow, if *living*, he will become the possessor of the Van Huyden estate, a richer man than Girard and Astor together; ay, ten Astors and Girards on top of that. As his wife, your position will be that of a queen; and as for myself, I will sacrifice my hopes as the brother of the testator, in order to behold you the queenly wife of that testator's son. You hear me?"

"I do," gasped Frank.

"But there must be no mistake, mark you, no 'slip between the cup and the lip;' the time is too near, to trust this matter to the remotest chance of failure. He must be your husband ere he leaves this house, or,—"

"Or?" faltered Frank.

"Or,—mark you, I do not threaten; but I am speaking Fate,—or, he will not *appear* on the 25th of December."

"He will not *appear*? What mean you?" her voice suddenly changed; she laid her hand upon his shoulder. "Do you mean to say that you will *murder* him, dear father?"

"He will not *appear*, I said, and say it again," he resumed in the same determined voice; "and the inheritance of this incredible estate will fall either to the seven, or to myself, the brother, or,—are you listening, daughter?—to the *twin brother* of this boy."

"Twin brother?" echoed Frank, utterly amazed.

"Yes, twin brother. The time is short, and we must put what we have to say in the fewest words. You remember your lost brother, Gulian?"

"I do."

"He was not your brother, although you were always taught to regard him as such.

He was the twin brother of the boy who now leans against yonder pillar. On the night of his birth (wishing to destroy every obstacle between myself and my brother's estate), I stole him from his mother's arms. But when I learned the details of my brother's singular will, I resolved to rear him as my own, and keep him in reserve until the 25th of December, 1844, when thoroughly under my influence, and yet backed by undeniable proofs of his paternity, he would appear and claim his father's estate. It was not until 1832, that I learned that he had a twin brother in existence; you know what pains I took to sweep all proof of his existence from the memory of man; and it was only last night that I learned that this twin brother (now standing by yonder pillar), was still in being. Now, Frank, is the case clear? The one whom you were taught to call your brother Gulian, and to regard as lost, is neither your brother nor is he lost. He is living, and at my will, on the 25th of December, 1844,—to-morrow,—will appear in place of yonder youth, unless the marriage takes place at once."

Frank was utterly confounded. Well she remembered the revelation which Nameless made while in the clairvoyant state;* that his mother had given birth to two children, one of whom had been secreted by the father, the other stolen by the uncle, but that the lost boy, whom she had been taught to regard as her brother Gulian, was one of these twins, was the brother of Nameless,—this was indeed a revelation, an overwhelming surprise. For a moment she was silent; her brain throbbed painfully.

"But how am I to believe this story?"

"You can disbelieve it, if you like," responded her father drily, "and risk the consequences—"

"But will not the marriage be as certain to-morrow, the day after, nay a week hence,—" she faltered.

"Girl! you will drive me mad,—" he clutched her by the wrist:—"nothing is certain that is not accomplished—"

She felt the blood mount to her cheek, and her heart swell in her breast:

"Have you no shame?" she said and

flung his hand from her wrist—"Do you forget what you have made me? How can I, knowing what I am, what you have made me, urge him to hasten this marriage? Have you no shame? 'Come, I am lost and fallen,' shall I speak thus to him, 'I was sold into shame by my parents, when only fourteen years old. But you must marry me; to-night; at once; my father says so; he knows best; he sold me; and wants your fortune! do you wish me to speak thus to him, father dear?'"

It was now his turn to tremble. The proud spirit of her mother, (before he had degraded that mother,) spoke again in the tone, in the look of her daughter. He bit his lip, and ground his teeth.

"Frank, Frank, pity me,—I am desperate, but it is for your sake!" he cried, changing his method of attack—"Spare me the commission of a new crime,—spare me! I do not threaten, I entreat."

Wringing her hands within his own, he dragged her deeper into the shadows of the recess.

"Behold me at your feet;" he fell upon his knees; "the father on his knees at his daughter's feet; the father already steeped in crime, beseeches that daughter to save him from the commission of a new crime; to save him by simply pursuing her own happiness."

Frank was fearfully agitated; she drew her father to his right. "When do you wish the marriage to take place?" she said in a faltering tone.

"At once,—for your sake,—"

"But the clergyman,—"

"Dr. Bulgin is here. If you consent I will summon him to your chamber. The ceremony will take place there.

"Wait," she whispered; "I will see him. If I drop my kerchief, or take the cross from his neck all is right."

She glided from her father's side, and passing along the hall, among the maskers, soon stood by the side of Nameless once more.

Tarleton watched her as she went; watched her as she confronted Nameless; and while her back was toward him, endeavored, even through the distance, to mark the result of her mission, from the changes of the coun-

* See Chap. XVI Part 4, *Empire City*.

tenance of Nameless. Tarleton's form was concealed by the hangings of the recess, but his face, projecting from its shadow, was touched with faint light; light that only rendered more haggard and livid, its already haggard and livid lineaments. How earnestly he watched for the anticipated sign! It was not made. He clutched the hangings with both hands.

It had been a busy night with him. He had taken Ninety-One to the rooms of young Evelyn Somers, and placed the convict in one room, while the dead body of his own victim, rested in the other; thence he had passed to the library of Somers, the father, and held a pleasant chat with him; and from thence to the counting-room of Israel Yorke, where he had set Blossom on the track of Ninety-One. And from the counting-room of Israel Yorke, (after a deed or two which may hereafter be explained) he had repaired once more to the house of the merchant prince, in time to find Ninety-One accused of the murder of young Evelyn Somers. He had rushed to the room of Ninety-One, determined to avenge the murder of his friend, and to his great astonishment, found that Ninety-One had escaped by a secret door. Of course, the gallant Colonel knew nothing of that door! Then he had witnessed the death scene of the merchant-prince, and after threatening the boy, Gulian, he had returned to the Temple, brooding all sorts of schemes, big with all kinds of elaborate deviltry; and had discovered, to his real surprise, Nameless in his daughter's chamber! Discovered that Frank was in love with Nameless, and Nameless fascinated by Frank. A busy night, gallant Colonel! Well may you clutch the hangings with both hands, and watch for the falling of the 'kerchief, or the lifting of the cross!

"They are talking,—talking,—zounds! Why does she not give the sign? That sign given and all my difficulties are at an end! The seven heirs, Martin Fulmer, the estate, all are in my power!"

As these words escaped the Colonel's lips, two figures approached: one a knight in blue armor, (something like unto the stage image of the Ghost of Hamlet's father,) and the other in buff waistcoat, wide-skirted coat, ruffles, cocked hat, and buckskin small

clothes,—supposed altogether to resemble a gentleman of the old school. The blue knight and the gentleman of the old school were moderately inebriated: even to a sinuousness of gait, and a tremulousness of the knees.

"I say Colonel, *what—what news?*" hiccupped the knight.

"Yes, yes," remarked the gentleman of the old school, with a bold attempt at originality of thought, "*what news?*"

"Pop!" the Colonel looked at the knight,—"*Pills!*" he surveyed the gentleman of the old school; "*I've sad news for you. Passing by the house of old Mr. Somers, an hour or two ago, I discovered that his son had been murdered in his room, you mark me, by an escaped convict, who was found concealed on the premises. Sad news, boys!*"

"Extraordinary!" cried Pop and Pill in a breath. And the two drew near the principal and conversed at leisure with him; the Colonel all the while watching for the sign!

Frank and Nameless!

She found him leaning against the central pillar, his arms folded on his breast, his large gray eyes (for the mask had fallen from his face,) roving thoughtfully around the hall. How changed that face! The cheeks, no longer sallow, are flushed with hope; the lips, no longer colorless and dropped apart in vacant apathy, are firmly set together; the broad forehead, still white and massive, is stamped with thought; the thought which, no longer dismayed by the bitter past, looks forward, with a clear vision to the battles of the future. The events of the night had given new life to Nameless.

She caught his gaze,—and at once enchained it. His eye derived new fire from her look, but was chained to that look.

"It was *my father* who wished to speak with me, Gulian," she said, and watched each lineament of his countenance.

"Your father?" he echoed.

"My father, who has worked you so much wrong,—who has worked such bitter wrong to me,—and who this very night, while brooding schemes for your ruin, entered my chamber, and found you in my arms, and heard the solemn pledge which we exchanged."

"Well, Frank," he interrupted, gazing anxiously into her face.

"He confesses that our,—our *marriage*, will more than exceed his wildest hope. That the very thought of it, makes him feel bitter remorse for the past, and levels every evil thought, as regards the future. But—"

She paused and took his hands in hers, and bent her face nearer to him, until her burning gaze, riveted every power of his soul.

"But he is afraid that you will hereafter regret your pledge of marriage."

"Frank!"

"That you, as the possessor of incredible wealth, will look back with wonder, with contempt upon the hour, when you plighted your faith to one like me!"

"One like you! Frank, Frank, do you think thus?"

"That once secure in your possessions, you will regard as worse than idle words, a promise made to the daughter of your enemy,—to a woman, whose life has been—spare me—"

She buried her head upon his breast; he drew her to him and felt the beating of her heart.

"Oh, Frank, can you think thus meanly of me?" he cried, completely carried away by her wild beauty, her agitation, her tears. "My promise once made cannot be taken back. I know what I promise; I know the future. I have risen from the grave of my past life; you, too, shall rise from the grave of your past life. We will begin life anew. We will walk the world together! Oh, would that this hour, this moment, I could make my compact good, beyond all chance of change, all danger of repeal!"

"Do you really wish thus, Gulian?" She raised her face, and her soul was in her eyes. "Is that the deepest wish of your heart?"

"Frank, I swear it!"

She took the white cross from his neck,—held it for a moment over her head; it glittered brightly in the light; and then she wound the chain about her own neck, and the white cross glittered on her proud bosom.

"Take this in exchange"—she took the golden cross from her breast, and wound its

chain about his neck; the cross glitters over his heart—"in witness of our mutual pledge. And Gulian,—" there was a look—an extended hand—"Come!"

She led him from the light into the shadows, and—while his every pulse bounded as with a new life—from the hall.

And, as they passed from the hall, Leo the Tenth, clad in his cardinal attire, led his young nephew lovingly among the shadows of the vast apartment,—now pausing to refresh himself with sparkling Heidsieck, and now twining his arm about the nephew's waist, trying to soothe *her* mind upon some doctrinal point:

"Dearest Julia," he whispered, as they paused for a moment in the shadow of a pillar.

"Dearest Doctor," she responded—that is, the nephew, clad in blue frock-coat and trowsers; "you don't think that my husband ever will—"

The sentence was interrupted. A grave hidalgo, attired in black velvet, richly embroidered with gold, confronted the Doctor, otherwise Leo the Tenth, and whispered earnestly in his ear.

"Impossible!" responded Leo the Tenth, shaking his head. "Impossible, my dear Tarleton!"

"It *must* be," answered the hidalgo, emphatically. "A quiet room up stairs, and no one present save myself, the bridegroom and the bride."

"But my name will appear on the certificate," hesitated the Doctor, "and questions may be asked as to the *place* in which this marriage was celebrated, and *how* I came to be there."

"Pshaw! You are strangely scrupulous," returned the hidalgo. "I tell you, Doctor, it is a matter of the last importance, and cannot be put off. Then you can celebrate the marriage a *second* time, in *another place*, and—" he whispered a few emphatic words in the Doctor's ear.

Leo the Tenth was troubled, but he saw no way of escape.

"Well, well, be it so, Tarleton; you are an odd sort of fellow. Julia, dear,"—this, aside to his nephew; "wait for me in the Scarlet Chamber, up stairs, you know?" The nephew whispered *her* assent. "I'll join

you presently. Now Count,"—this to Tarleton,—“lead the way, and let us celebrate these mysterious nuptials.”

And the three left the Central Hall together. Tarleton and the Doctor, on their way to the Bridal Chamber, and the nephew on her way to the Scarlet Chamber.

Near the central pillar stood the White Monk, with the hands of the White Nun resting on his shoulders, and his arms about her waist. Her hood has fallen; her countenance, flushed and glowing, lies open to his gaze. A beautiful nun, with blue eyes, swimming in fiery light, and unbound hair, bright as gold, sweeping a cheek like a rosebud, and resting upon neck and shoulders white as snow. And the White Monk bends down, and their lips meet, and she falls, half passionately, half shuddering, on his breast.

“Oh, Beverly, Beverly! whither would you lead me?” He scarce can distinguish the words, so faint, so broken by agitation is her voice.

“Your husband is false. He has trampled upon your love. I love you, and will avenge you. Come, Joanna!”

And from the light into the shadow, with the trembling nun half resting on his arm, half reposing on his breast, passes the White Monk. They reach the threshold of the hall. Pass it not, Joanna, as you love your child! pass it not, on peril of your soul! But no! “Come, Joanna!” and they are gone together.

From the throng of maskers who glide to and fro, select, for a moment, the lady in black, who stands gloomily yonder, gathering the folds of her robe about her face. Does this scene attract, or repel her? Within that shapeless robe, does her bosom swell with pleasure—voluptuous pleasure? or does it contract with terror and loathing?

Her Turkish friend,—the diminutive gentleman in the red jacket, spangled all over, blue trowsers and red morocco boots,—in vain offers her a glass of sparkling champagne; and just as vainly essays to draw her forth in conversation. At last, he seems to weary of her continued silence:

“If you will favor me with your company for a few moments, I will explain the purpose which impelled me to request an interview at this place.”

“Let it be at once, then,” is the whispered reply.

He offers his arm; she quietly but firmly pushes it aside.

“I will follow you,” she says in her low-toned voice.

And the Turk leaves the hall, followed by the Lady in Black.

“The Blue Chamber!” he ejaculates, as he crosses the threshold.

Look again among the throng of guests. The stately Roderick Borgia stands yonder, his massive form reflected in a mirror, and the white robed Lucretia resting on his arm. They are masked; you cannot see the voluptuous loveliness of her face, nor the somber passion of his bronzed visage. But his brow,—that vast forehead, big with swollen veins,—is visible; and the mirror reflects her spotless neck and shoulders, and the single lily set among the meshes of her raven hair. It is a fine picture; the majestic Borgia, clad in purple, the enticing Lucretia robed in snowy white: never before did mirror reflect a more striking contrast. You hear his voice—that voice whose organ-like depth stirs the blood:

“A career, beautiful lady, now opens before you, such as the proudest queen might envy—”

And he attempts to take her soft, white hand within his own. But she gently withdraws it from his grasp. Lucretia, it seems, is timid, or—artful.

“Yes, we will revive the day, when intellect and beauty, embodied in a woman’s form, ruled the world.” How his deep voice adds force to his words. “Yes, yes; you shall be my Queen—mine! But come; I have that to say to you, which will have a vital bearing upon your fate.”

“And my brother?” whispers Lucretia.

“And also the fate of your brother,” responds Roderick Borgia. “Come with me to the Golden Room.”

“To the Golden Room be it then!”

And Lucretia leans on the arm of Borgia and goes with him from the Hall to the Golden Room: his broad chest swelling with the anticipation of triumph,—and her right hand resting upon the hilt of the poniard which is inserted in the scarf that binds her waist.

Ere we follow the guests who have left the hall, and trace their various fortunes, let us cast a momentary glance upon those who remain.

The Caliph Haroun Alraschid sits by yonder table, sipping champagne from a long-necked glass, which now and then is pressed by the lips of his fair abdess. The caliph has evidently been refreshing himself too bountifully with the wines of the Giaour; his mask falls aside, and beneath his turban, instead of the grave oriental features of the magnificent sultan, you discern the puffy face and carbuncled nose of a Wall street broker.

A little beyond the caliph, a pope has fallen to sleep on yonder sofa, the triple crown resting neglected at his feet, and his pontifical robes soiled with the stains of wine. The cardinal and his Quakeress are trying the steps of the last waltz. The christian knight and his houri, stand by the table, near the pillar,—discussing the merits of Mahomet's paradise? No! But the remains of a cold boiled fowl. And then, in the shadows of the pillars, and in front of the lofty mirrors, still glided to and fro the contrasted train of monks and nuns, knights and houris, cardinals and Quakeresses, popes and dancing girls. All were masked—still masked: for there were faces in that hall which you may have often seen in the dress circle of the opera, or in the dress pews of the fashionable church. Remove those masks? Never! not as you value the peace of a hundred families, the reputation of some of our most exclusive fashionables, the repose of "good society."

Thus the maskers glide along; the music strikes up in an adjoining hall—the dance begins—the orgie deepens,—and,—

Let the curtain fall.

CHAPTER II.

THE BLUE ROOM.

THE diminutive Turk, followed by the Lady in Black, led the way from the hall, to a distant and secluded apartment. She still gathered the hood of her robe closely about her face, and not a word was spoken as they pursued their way along the dark passage. A door was opened, and they entered a small although luxurious apartment, hung with hangings of azure, veined

with golden flowers. A wax candle, placed in its massive candlestick, on a table before a mirror, gave light to the place. It was a silent, cozy, and luxurious nook of the Temple, remote from the hall, and secure from all danger of interruption.

As the Turk entered he flung aside his mask and turban, and disclosed the ferret eyes, bald head and wiry whiskers of Israel Yorke. Israel's bald head was fringed with white hairs; his wiry whiskers touched with gray; it was a strange contrast between his practical *bank-note* face, and his oriental costume.

"Now," he cried, flinging himself into a chair, "let us come to some understanding. What in the deuce do you mean?"

"What do I mean?" echoed the Lady in Black, who, seated on the sofa, held the folds of the robe across her face.

"Yes, *what* do you mean?" replied Israel, giving his Turkish jacket a petulant twitch. "Did I not help you out of that difficulty in Canal street, last evening, and rescue you from the impertinence of the shop-keeper?"

"Yes," briefly responded the lady.

"Did I not, seeing your forlorn and desolate condition, pin a note to your shawl, signed with my own name, asking you to meet me at this place, at twelve o'clock, 'where,' so I said, 'my worthy and unprotected friend, now so bravely endeavoring to get bread for an afflicted father, you will hear of something greatly to your advantage.' Those were my words, '*greatly to your advantage*'"

"Those were the words," echoed the lady, still preserving her motionless attitude.

"And in the note I inclosed the pass-word by which only admittance can be gained to this mansion?"

"You did. I used it; entered the mansion and met you." Her voice was scarcely audible and very tremulous.

"You met me, oh, indeed you met me," said Israel, pulling his gray whiskers; "but what of that? An hour and more has passed. You have refused even a glass of wine,—have never replied one word to all my propositions; egad! I have not even seen your face."

"And now you have brought me to this lonely apartment to repeat your proposals?"

"Yes!" Israel picked up his turban and twirled it round on the end of his finger. "I want a plain answer, yes, or no! I am a plain man,—a man of business. You are poor, almost starving (pardon me if I pain you), and you have an aged and helpless father on your hands. You have nothing to look forward to, but starvation, or, the streets. You remember the scene in the shirt-store to-night?"

The lady gently bowed her head, and raised both hands to her face.

"I am rich, benevolent, always had a good heart,"—another twirl of the turban,—and in a day or two I am about to sail for Havana. Accompany me! Your father shall be settled comfortably; the sea-breezes will do you good, and,—and,—the climate is delicious." And the fervent Turk stroked his bald head, and smoothed his white hairs.

"Accompany you," said the lady, slowly; "in what capacity? As a daughter, perchance?"

"Not ex-act-ly as a daugh-t-e-r," responded Israel; "but as a *companion*."

There was a pause, and the robe was gently removed from the head and face of the Lady in Black. A beautiful countenance, shaded by dark brown hair, was disclosed; young and beautiful, although there was the shadow of sorrow on the cheeks, and traces of tears in the eyes. An expression inexpressibly sad and touching came over that face, as she said, in a voice which was musical in its very tremor,—

"And you, sir, knew my father in better days?"

"I did."

"You never knew any one of his race guilty of a dishonorable act?"

"Never did."

"And now you find him aged and helpless,—find myself, his only hope, reduced to the last extreme of poverty, with no prospect but (your own words), starvation, or the streets,—"

"Ay." Israel, beneath his spectacles, seemed to cast an admiring glance at his Turkish trowsers and red morocco boots.

"And in this hour, you, an old friend of the family, who have never known one of our name guilty of an act of dishonor, come to me, and seeing my father's affliction, and

my perfectly helpless condition, gravely propose that I shall escape dishonor by becoming your—*mistress*! That is your proposition, sir."

She rose and placed her hand firmly on Israel's shoulder, and looked him fixedly in the eye. The little man was thunderstruck. Her flashing eyes, her bosom heaving proudly under its faded covering, the proud curl of her lip, and the firm pressure of the hand which rested on his shoulder, took the Financier completely by surprise.

"I am scarce sixteen years old," she continued, her eyes growing larger and brighter, "my childhood was passed without a care. But in the last two years I have gone through trials that madden me now to think upon; trials that the aged and experienced are rarely called upon to encounter; but in the darkest hour, I have never forgotten these words, 'Trust in God;' never for an instant believed that God would ever leave me to become the prey of a man like *you*."

And she pressed his shoulder, until the little man shook again, his gold spectacles rattling on his nose.

"For, do you mark me, the very trials that have well-nigh driven me mad, have also given me strength and courage, may be, the strength, the courage of despair, but still the courage, when the last hope fails, to choose death before dishonor!"

"But your father," faltered Israel.

"My father is without bread; but once in twenty-four hours have I tasted food, and that a miserable morsel; but rather than accept your proposals, and lie down with shame, I would put the poison vial first to my father's lips, then to my own! Yes, Israel Yorke, there is a God, and He, in this house, when the last hope has gone out, when there is nothing but death before, gives me strength to spit upon your infamous proposals, and to die! Strength such as you will never feel in your death-hour!"

"Pretty talk, pretty talk," faltered Israel; "but what does it amount to? Talk on, still the fact remains; you and your father are starving, and you reject the offer of the only one who can relieve you."

She raised her eyes to heaven. She folded her hands upon her heaving breast. Her face was unnaturally pallid; her eyes unnat-

usually bright. As she stood, in an attitude so calm and severe, she was wondrously beautiful. Her voice was marked with singular elation,—

"O, my God! there must be a hell," she said. "There must be a place where the injustice of this world is made straight; else why does this man sit here, clad in ill-gotten and superfluous wealth, while my aged father, one of his victims, lacks at this hour even a crust of bread?"

Israel's feelings can only be described by a single word—"uncomfortable." He shifted nervously in his chair, and twirled his turban on the end of his finger; then rubbed his bald head, smoothed his white hair, and pulled his wiry whiskers.

"What in the devil did you come to see me for, if such was your opinion of me?"

"I came to see you as a last hope;" her countenance fell, and her tone was that of unalloyed despair. "I thought that remorse had been busy at your heart; that you wished to atone for the past by a just, although tardy, restitution. I thought—"

"Remorse! restitution!" laughed the Financier. "Come, I like that!"

"That knowing the utterly destitute condition of the father, you had summoned the daughter, in order to tender to her, at least, a portion of the wealth which you wrung from him—"

Choked by emotion, she could not proceed, but grew pale and paler, until a flood of tears came to her relief.

"O, sir, a pittance, a pittance, to save my father's life!" She flung herself at his feet, and clutched his knees. Her much-worn bonnet fell back upon her neck, and her hair burst its fastening, and descended in wavy masses upon her shoulders. Her face was flushed with sudden warmth; her eyes shone all the brighter for their tears. "A pittance out of your immense wealth, to save the life of your old friend, my father! His daughter begs it at your feet."

Israel gazed at her deliberately through his gold spectacles,—

"Oh, no, my dear," he said, and a sneer curled his cold lip; "you are too damnably virtuous."

The maiden said no more. Relaxing her grasp, she fell at his feet, and lay there, pale

and insensible, her long hair floating on the carpet. The agony which she had endured in the last twenty-four hours had reached its climax. She was stretched like a dead woman at the feet of the Financier.

"Trust in God,—good motto for a picture-book; but what good does it do you now my dear?" thus soliloquized Israel, as he knelt beside the insensible girl. "Don't discount that kind o' paper in my bank that I know of. Fine arm, that, and splendid bust!" He surveyed her maidenly, yet rounded proportions. "If it was not for her stubborn virtue, she would make a splendid companion. Well, well,—"

A vile thought worked its way through every lineament of his face.

"Once in my power, all her scruples would be at an end. We are alone,"—he glanced around the cozy apartment,— "and I think I'll try the effect of an anodyne. Anodynes are good for fainting spells, I believe."

He drew a slender vial from beneath his Turkish jacket, and holding it between himself and the light, examined it steadily with one eye.

"It is well I thought of it! 'Twill revive her,—make her gently delirious for a while, and she will not come to herself completely until to-morrow; much surer than persuasion, and quicker! Trust in God,—a-hem!"

He raised her head on his knee, and uncorked the vial and held it to her lips.

At that moment there was a quick, rapid knock at the door. It broke startlingly upon the dead stillness.

"Why did I not lock it?" cried Israel, his hand paralyzed, even as it held the vial to the poor girl's lips.

Too late! The door opened, and one by one, six sturdy men, in rough garments and with faces by no means ominous of good, stalked into the room.

And over the shoulders of the six, appeared six other faces, all wearing that same discouraging expression. It may not be improper to state that every one of the twelve carried in his right hand a piece of wood, that deserved the name of a stick, perchance, a club.

And shuffling over the floor, they encircled Israel. "Got him," said one who appeared to be the spokesman of the band, "safe and

tight! Had a hunt, but fetched him at last. I say, Israel, my Turk, (a gentle hint with a club), get up and redeem your paper!"

And he held a bundle of bank notes,—Chow Bunk, Muddy Run, Terrapin Hollow, under the nose of the paralyzed Financier.

CHAPTER III.

THE GOLDEN ROOM.

RODERICK BORGIA leads Lucretia across the threshold of the Golden Room. She utters an ejaculation of wonder mingled with terror. For it is a magnificent, and yet a gloomy place that Golden Room. A large square apartment, the walls concealed by black hangings,—hangings of velvet fringed with gold. The floor is covered with a dark carpet, the ceiling represents a sun radiating among sullen clouds. The chairs, the sofa, are covered with black velvet, and framed in gold. Only a single mirror is there,—opposite the sofa, reaching from the floor to the ceiling, framed in ebony, which in its turn is framed in a border of gold. A lamp, whose light is softened by a clouded shade, stands on an ebony table, between the sofa and the mirror, and around the lamp are clustered fruits and flowers, two long necked glasses, and a bottle of Bohemian glass, blue, veined with gold. A single picture, suspended against the dark hangings, alone relieves the sullen grandeur of the place. It is of the size of life, and represents Lucretia Borgia, her unbound hair waving darkly over her white shoulders, and half bared bosom, her eyes shooting their maddening glance, from the shadow of the long eyelashes, her form clad in a white garment, edged with scarlet,—a garment which, light and airy, floats like a misty veil about her beautiful shape. Coming from the darkness into this scene, the masked Lucretia, as we have said, could not repress an ejaculation, half astonishment, half fear—

"Never fear," cries Roderick gayly, as he flung his plumed cap on the table. "It looks gloomy enough, but then it is like the Golden Room in the Vatican, of which history tells. "And then,"—he pointed to the picture, "the living Lucretia need not fear a comparison with the dead one. Remove your mask! I am dying to look upon you."

Lucretia sank upon the sofa with Roderick by her side. Roderick unmasked and revealed the somber features of Gabriel Godlike. Lucretia dropped her mask, and the light shone on the face of Esther Royaltan.

"By heavens, you are beautiful!"—his eyes streamed with singular intense light, from the shadow of his projecting brow.

And she was beautiful. A faultless shape, neck and shoulders white as snow, a countenance framed in jet-black hair, the red bloom of a passionate organization on lips and cheeks, large eyes, whose intense light was rather deepened than subdued by the shadow of the long eyelashes. And then the blush which coursed over her face and neck, as she felt Godlike's burning gaze fixed upon her, can be compared to nothing save a sudden flash of morning sunlight, trembling over frozen snow. One of those women, altogether, whose organization embodies the very intensity of intellect and passion, and whose way in life lies along no middle track, but either rises to the full sunlight, or is lost in shadows and darkness.

"You consent, my child?" Godlike softened his organ-like voice,—took her hand within his own—she did not give, nor did she withdraw her hand,—"Randolph shall go abroad, upon an honorable mission to a foreign court, where he will be treated as a man, without regard to the taint (if thus it may be called) in his blood. He will have fair and free scope for the development of his genius. And you,—"

He paused. She lifted her eyes to his face, and met his burning glances, with a searching and profound look.

"And myself,—"

"And you shall go with me to Washington, where your beauty shall command all hearts, your intellect carve for yourself a position, that a queen might envy."

She made no reply, but her eyes were downcast, her beautiful forehead darkened by a shade of thought. Was she measuring the full force and meaning of his words?

"In,—what—capacity—did—you—say?" she asked at length in a faint voice.

"As my ward,—" responded Godlike; "you will be known as my ward, the heiress and daughter of a wealthy West Indian, who at his death, intrusted your person and for-

tune to my care. You will have your own mansion, your pair of servants, carriage and so-forth,—in fact, all the externals of a person of immense wealth. As my ward you will enter the first circles of society. The whole machinery of life at the Capital will be laid bare to your gaze, and with your hand upon the spring which sets that machinery in motion, you can command it to your will. You will not live, you will reign!”

“Tell me something,” said Esther, in a low voice, her bosom for a moment swelling above the scarlet border of her robe,—“Tell me something of life at the Capital,—life in Washington City.”

Godlike laughed until his broad chest shook again,—a deep sardonic laugh.

“Poets have prated of the influence of woman, and most wildly! But life in Washington City distances the wildest dream of the poets. There woman is supreme. Never was her influence so absolute before, at any court,—neither at the court of Louis the Great, nor that of George the Fourth,—as at the plain republican court of Washington City. The simple people, afar off from Washington, think that it is the President, the Heads of the Department, the Senators and Representatives, who make the laws and wield the destinies of the republic. They think of great men sitting in council, by the midnight lamp, their hearts heavy, their eyes haggard with much watching over the welfare of the nation. Bah! when the real legislator is not a grave senator or solemn minister of state, but some lovely woman, armed only with a pair of bright eyes, and a soft musical voice. The grave legislators of the male gender, strut grandly in their robes of office, before the scenes,—and that poor dumb beast, the people, opens its big eyes, and stares and struts; but behind the scenes, it is woman who pulls the wires, makes the laws, and sets the nation going.” He paused and laughed again. “Why, my child, I have known the gravest questions, in which the very fate of the nation was involved, decided upon, in senate or in cabinet, after long days and nights of council and debate, and,—knocked to pieces in an instant by the soft fingers of a pretty woman. It is red tape, *versus* bright eyes in

Washington City, and eyes always carry the day.”

“This is indeed a strange story you are telling me,” said Esther, her eyes still downcast.

Godlike for a moment surveyed himself in the mirror opposite, and laughed.

“I vow I had quite forgotten, that I was arrayed in this singular costume,—scarlet tunic, edged with ermine, and so-forth,—it is something in the style of Borgia, and,” he added to himself, surveying the somber visage and massive forehead, surmounted by iron gray hair,—“not so bad looking for a man of sixty! You think it impossible?” he continued aloud, turning to Esther, who had raised her hand thoughtfully to her forehead,—“why my dear child, a man who lives in Washington for any time, sees strange things. I have seen a husband purchase a mission by the gift of the person of a beautiful wife; I have seen a brother mount to office over the ruins of his sister’s honor; I have seen a gray-haired father, when all his claims for position proved fruitless, place in the scale, the chastity of an only and beautiful daughter—and win. By——!” he drew down his dark brows, until his eyes were scarcely visible, “How is it possible to look upon mankind with anything but contempt,—contempt and scorn!”

“But,” and Esther raised her eyes to that bronzed face, every lineament of which now worked with a look of indescribable scorn,—“you have genius,—the loftiest! you tower above the mass of men. You have influence,—an influence rarely given to any one man; it spans the continent; why not use your genius and influence to make men better?”

There was something in her tone, which struck the heart of Godlike. The expression of intense scorn was succeeded by a look of sadness as intense. His brows rose, and his eyes looked forth, large, clear and dreamy. It was as though that dark countenance, seamed by the wrinkles of long years of sin, had been, for an instant, baptized with the hope and freshness of youth.

“That was long ago; long ago; the dream of making men better. I felt it once,—tried to carry it into deeds. But the dream has long since past. I awakened from it many years ago.

You see it is very pleasant to believe in the innate goodness of human nature, but attempt to carry it into action, and hark! do you not hear them, the very people, to whom yesterday you sacrificed your soul; hark! 'crucify him! crucify him!'

He rose from the sofa, and the mirror reflected his majestic form, clad in the attire of Roderick Borgia, and his dark visage, stamped with genius on the giant forehead, and burning with the light of a giant soul in the lurid eyes. He was strangely agitated. His chest heaved beneath his masker's attire. There was an absent, dreamy look in his upraised eyes.

"I used to think of it, and dream over it, in my college days,—of that history in which 'Hosanna!' is shouted to-day, and palm branches strewn; and to-morrow,—the hall of Pilate, the crown of thorns, the march up Calvary, and the felon's cross! I used, I say, to think and dream over it in my college days. As I looked around the world and surveyed history, and found the same story everywhere: found that for bold imposture and giant humbug, in every age, the world had riches, honor, fame, while in return, for any attempt to make it better, it had the cry, 'crucify! crucify!' it had the scourge, the crown of thorns, and the felon's cross."

His voice swelled bold and deep through the silent room; as he uttered the last word, he raised his hand to his eyes, and for a moment was buried in the depth of his emotions. Esther, raising her eyes, regarded with looks of mingled admiration and awe, that forehead, upon which the veins stood forth bold and swollen,—the handwriting of the inward thought.

"The devil is a very great fool," he said, with a burst of laughter, "to give himself so much trouble about a world which is not worth the damning." And then turning to Esther, he said bitterly: "Do you ask me why I utterly despise mankind, and why I have lost all faith in good? In the course of a long and somewhat tumultuous life, I have found one thing true,—whenever from a pure impulse, I have advocated a noble thought, or done a good deed, I have been hunted like a dog, and whenever from mere egotism, I have defended a bad principle, or

achieved an infamous deed, I have been worshiped as a demigod. Yes, it is not for one's bad deeds that we are blamed; it is for the good, that condemnation falls upon us."

He strode to the table, and filled a glass to the brim with blood-red Burgundy: "My beautiful Esther, your answer! Which do you choose? On the one hand want and persecution, on the other, position and power,—yes, on the one hand the life of the hunted pariah; on the other, sway of an absolute queen."

He drained the glass, without removing it from his lips; then advancing to the sofa, he took her hands within his own, and raised her gently to her feet.

"Esther, it is time to make your choice," he said, bending the force of his gaze upon that beautiful countenance: "which will you be? Your brother's slave, hunted at every step, and even doomed to be the pariah of the social world,—or, will you be the ward of Gabriel Godlike, the beautiful heiress of his West Indian friend, the unrivaled queen of life at the capital?"

Esther felt his burning gaze, and said with downcast eyes,—her voice very low and faint—"And in return for this generous protection, what am I to give you?"

"Can you ask, my child?" he said, and pressed her hand within his own.—"You will be my friend, my counselor, my companion."

"Companion?"

"Wearied with the toils of state, the wear and tear of the world,—in your presence, I will seek oblivion of the world and its cares. With you I will grow young again, and—who knows—but guided by you, I shall, even at three-score, learn to hope in man? Your heart is fresh, your intellect clear and vivid: I shall often seek your counsel in affairs of state, for I have learned, that in nine cases out of ten, it is better to rely upon the intuitions of woman, than upon the careful logic of the shrewdest man. In a word, dear child, you will be my companion,—my divinity!"

"Divinity?"

"Yes,—divinity! Tradition says that Lucretia Borgia was the most wondrously beautiful woman of all her age; and if

yonder canvas does not flatter her, tradition does not lie. Now, you are living and more beautiful than Lucretia Borgia, without her crimes. Yes, more lovely than Lucretia, and,—pure as heaven's own light."

"Pure as heaven's own light?"

"You echo me,—and with a mocking smile. Woman! your beauty maddens me! I adore you!" His face was flushed with passion,—his deep-set eyes flamed with a fire that could not be mistaken,—his voice, at other times deep as an organ, was tremulous and broken. First pressing her clasped hands against his broad chest,—which heaved with emotion,—he next girdled her waist with his sinewy arm, and despite her struggles, drew her to his bosom. "Gaze upon yonder portrait! those eyes are wildly beautiful, but pale when compared with yours. That form is cast in the mould of voluptuous loveliness, but yours,—yours, Esther,—yours—"

Advancing toward the portrait, he pushed the hangings aside,—the doorway of an adjoining apartment was revealed.

"Come, Esther, by heavens you must be mine,—and now!"

There was no mistaking the determination of that husky voice, the passion of that bloodshot eye.

Now pale as death, now covered from the bosom to the brow with burning blushes, she struggled in his embrace, but in vain. He dragged her near and nearer to the threshold—on the threshold (which divided the Golden Room from the next apartment, where all was dark as midnight) he paused, drew her struggling form to his breast, and stifled the cry which rose to her lips, with burning kisses.

With a desperate effort she glided from his arms, and the next moment,—her hair unloosed on her bosom bared in the struggle,—confronted him with the poniard gleaming over her head.

"Hoary villain!" she cried, dilating in every inch of her stature, until she seemed to rival his almost giant height,—“lay but a finger on me and you shall pay for the outrage with your life!"

Her head thrown back, her bared bosom swelling madly in the light, her dark hair resting in one rich, wavy mass upon her neck and shoulders,—it was a noble picture. And

her eyes,—you should have seen the flashing of her eyes! As for the statesman, with one foot upon the threshold, he turned his face over his shoulder, thus exhibiting his massive features in profile, and gazed upon her with a look which was something between the sublime and the ridiculous; a strange mixture of passion, wonder and chagrin.

"Esther,—"

"No doubt you can induce husbands to sell their wives to you;" the eyes still flashed, and the poniard glittered overhead; "no doubt, gray-haired fathers have sold their daughters to your embrace; nay, even brothers, for a place, may have given their sisters to your lust; but know," again that bitter word so bitterly said,—“*hoary villain!*"—"know, hoary villain! that Esther Royalton will not sell herself to you, even to purchase her brother's safety, his life, much less her own! For know, that while there is a taint upon my blood, that there is blood in my veins which never knew dishonor, the blood of ————, whose grandchild stands before you!"

As she named that name, Godlike repeated it from pure astonishment.

"You a statesman! you a leader of the American people! Faugh! (Back! Lay not a finger upon me as you value your life!) May God help the Republic whose leaders play the farce of solemn statesmanship by daylight, and at night seek their inspiration in the orgies of the brothel!"

"But, Esther, you mistake me; do not raise your voice,—” his face flushed, his eyes bloodshot, he advanced toward her.

At the same instant she caught the purpose of his eye, and with a blush of mingled shame and anger, for the first time became aware that her bosom was bared to the light.

She retreated,—Godlike advanced,—she, brandishing the dagger,—he, with his hands extended, his face mad with baffled passion. Thus retreating, step by step before him, she reached the table, and cast a lightning glance toward the lamp.

"You shall be mine, I swear it!" He darted forward.

But while her right hand held the dagger aloft, her left sought the lamp, and even as

he rushed forward with the oath on his lips, the room was wrapt in utter darkness.

He was foiled. A mocking laugh, which resounded through the darkness, did not add to his composure.

"Esther, Esther," he said, in a softer tone, endeavoring to smother his rage, "I will not harm you, I swear it."

And with his hands extended he advanced in the thick gloom; and Esther, with the handle of her poniard, knocked thrice upon the ebony table.

"Dearest Esther,"—he advanced in the direction from whence the knocks proceeded, and came in contact with a form,—the form of a voluptuous woman, with a young bosom warm with life, and young limbs moulded in the flowing lines of the Medicean Venus? No. Precisely the contrary. But he came in contact with a brawny form, which bounded against him, pinioning his arms to his side, at the same moment that another brawny form clasped him from behind. In a moment, ere he had recovered the surprise caused by this double and unexpected embrace, his arms were tied behind his back, a handkerchief was tightly bound across his mouth, and a second kerchief across his eyes, he was lifted from his feet, and borne upon the shoulders of two muscular men. It was not dignified or statesmanlike, but,—historical truth demands the record,—while in this position, the grave statesman kicked, deliberately and wickedly kicked. But he kicked in vain.

Presently he was placed upon his feet again, and seated in a chair whose oaken back reached above his head, and whose oaken arms pressed against his sides. He could not see, but he felt that light was shining on his face.

So suddenly had his capture been achieved, so strange and complete was the transition from the pursuit of the beautiful Esther, to his present blindfolded and helpless condition, that the statesman, for a few moments, almost believed himself the victim of some grotesque and frightful dream.

All was silent around him.

At length a voice was heard, hollow and distinct in its every tone,—

"Gabriel Godlike, you are now about to be put on trial before the Court of Ten Millions."

There was a long pause; and Godlike, on the moment, remembered every detail which Harry Royalton had poured into his ears, concerning this Court of Ten Millions; its power backed by ten millions of dollars,—its jurisdiction over crimes that 'Courts of Justice' could not reach,—its sessions held in the deep silence of night, and its judgments executed as soon as pronounced. Vividly the story of Harry rose before him; the accusation, the trial, the judgment, the lash, and the back of the criminal covered with stripes and blood.

"The Court of Ten Millions,"—the voice was heard again,—"as you are, doubtless, aware, is thus called, because its power is backed by ten millions of dollars. It exists to punish those crimes which, perchance, from their very magnitude, go unpunished by other courts of justice. It exists to judge and punish two classes of crime in especial: crimes committed for the *love of money*, by the man who seeks to enjoy *labor's fruits*, without sharing *labor's works*; crimes committed by the man who uses his *wealth*, or *the accident of his social position*, as the means of oppressing his fellow-creature, even the poorest and the meanest. Your mind is profound in analysis. You are able, at a glance, to trace nearly all the wrongs which desolate society, and mar the purposes of God in this world, to the classes of crimes which have been named."

There was another long pause. Gabriel had time for thought.

"Gabriel Godlike! Detected in a gross outrage upon a woman whom you thought poor and friendless,—detected in using your wealth and your social position as the means of achieving that woman's dishonor, you are now about to be put on trial before the Court of Ten Millions."

Another pause. Gabriel began to recover his scattered senses. The bandage across his mouth concealed the sardonic smile which flitted over his lips.

"A sort of *Vixhne Gericht*,—something from the dark ages,"—he ejaculated, mentally. And yet he did not feel comfortable. There was Harry Royalton's back; he had seen it. "But *they* would not dare to flog a statesman,—me! Gabriel Godlike!"

"Still you are at liberty to refuse a trial

before this court,"—the voice spoke again,—“but upon one condition. In a room not far removed from this, removed from hearing, and yet within a moment's call, are gathered at this moment a number of gentlemen, who have been summoned to this house on various pretexts; gentlemen, you will remark, of all political parties, high in social position, and bearing the reputation of honorable minded and moral men. Your strongest political friends, your bitterest political opponents are there.”

Gabriel began to listen with attention.

“Now you may refuse to be tried before this court on one condition,—that you will be exposed to the gaze of this party of gentlemen, in your present state, with your masquerade attire, and in presence of the woman whom, but a moment since, you threatened with a gross outrage.”

Gabriel listened with keener interest.

“If you doubt that this party of gentlemen, consisting of—(he named a number of names familiar to Godlike's ear)—are within call, your doubt can be solved in a moment.”

“It is an infernal trap,” and Gabriel ground his teeth with suppressed rage.

“If you consent to be tried by this court, be pleased to give a gesture of assent.”

Gabriel revolved for a moment within himself, and then slowly nodded his head.

The bandage was removed from his eyes, and the kerchief from his mouth. He slowly surveyed the scene in which, much against his will, he found himself an actor.

It was a spacious apartment, resembling the Golden Room, the walls were hung with black velvet, fringed with gold, and dotted with golden flowers; the ceiling represented a gloomy sky, with the sun in the center, struggling among clouds. It was the same to which he was about to conduct Esther when she escaped from his arms and confronted him with the poniard.

But in place of the voluptuous couch which had stood there, with silken pillows and canopy white as snow, there was a large table covered with black cloth, and extending across the room from wall to wall, and behind the table a raised platform, on which stood an arm-chair, beneath a canopy of dark velvet. A lighted candle in an iron candlestick, stood on the center of the table, and

near it, a knotted rope, a book, an inkstand, and a sheet of white paper.

The judge of the court was seated in the arm-chair, under the shadow of the canopy. His face Godlike could not see, for he wore a hat whose ample brim concealed his features, but his white hair descended to the collar of his coat. He wore an old-fashioned surtout of dark cloth, with manifold capes, about the shoulders. His head was bent, his hands clasped, his attitude that of profound quiet or profound thought.

On his left, resting one hand on the arm of his chair, was Esther; her white dress in bold relief with the dark background. Her unbound hair increased the deathlike pallor of her face, and her eyes shone with all their fire.

And on the right of the judge stood a huge negro, whose giant frame was clad in a suit of sleek blue cloth, while his white cravat and his wool, also of snow-like whiteness, increased the blackness of his visage. It was, of course, old Royal. He also rested one hand on an arm of the judge's chair.

And on the right and left of Gabriel's chair, stood a muscular man, whose features were hidden by a crape mask.

The scene altogether was highly dramatic. The Borgian attire of Godlike by no means detracted from its dramatic effect.

The silence of the place,—the gloom scarcely broken by the light of the solitary candle,—the contrast between this scene and the one in which he had been an actor but a few moments previous,—all had their effect upon the mind of the statesman.

“A trap! get out of it as I may. An infernal trap!”

Without raising his head, or removing his clasped hands from his breast, the judge spoke, in an even and distinct, although hollow voice,—

“You may still refuse to be tried by this court. Consent to be exposed in your present condition to the gentlemen whom I have named, (and who may be brought hither in an instant), and the trial will not proceed.”

The blood rushed to Gabriel's face, but he made no reply.

“Or, if you doubt that those gentlemen are near, it is not too late to remove your doubts.”

The veins began to swell on Gabriel's forehead.

"Go on," he said, in a half-smothered tone.

The judge extended his hand and placed a parchment in the hands of Esther.

"Read the accusation," he said, and in a voice at first low and faint, but gradually growing stronger and deeper, Esther read, while a death-like stillness prevailed:

"Gabriel Godlike is accused of the following offenses against man, against society, against God:—

"As a man of genius, intrusted by the Almighty with the noblest, the most exalted powers, and bound to use those powers for the good of his race, he has, in the course of his whole life, prostituted those powers to the degradation and oppression of his race.

"As a statesman, rivaling in intellect the three great names of the nineteenth century, Clay, Calhoun and Webster, he has not, like these great men, been governed by a high aim, an earnest-souled sincerity. His intellect approaches theirs in powers, but as a man, as a statesman, he has not exhibited their virtues. Wielding a vast influence, and bound to use that influence in securing to the masses such laws as will invest every man with the right to the full fruits of his labor, and the possession of a home, he has lent his influence, sold his intellect, mortgaged his official position, to those who enslave labor in workshop and factory, defraud it in banks, and rob the laborer—the free-man—of a piece of land which he may call by the sacred title of home.

"As a lawyer, having a profound knowledge of the technicalities of written law, and an intuitive knowledge of that great law of God, which proclaims that all men are brothers, bound to each other by ties of reciprocal love and duty, he has used his knowledge of written law to gloss over and sanction the grossest wrongs; he has darkened and distorted the great laws of God to suit any case of social tyranny, no matter how damning, how revolting, which he has been called upon to defend for hire.

"As a citizen, bound to illustrate in his life the purity of the christian, the integrity of the republican, he has never known the affections of a wife, or children, but his pri-

vate career has been one long catalogue of the basest appetites, gratified at the expense of every tie of truth and honor.

"In his long career, he has exhibited that saddest of all spectacles:—a lawyer, with no sense of right or wrong, higher than his fee; a statesman, regarding himself not as the representative of the people, but as the feed and purchased lawyer of a class; a man of god-like intellect, without faith in God, without love for his race."

Esther concluded; her face was radiant, but her eyes dimmed with tears.

"Gabriel Godlike, what say you to this accusation?" exclaimed the judge.

A sardonic smile agitated the lips of the statesman, but he made no reply in words. At the same time, despite his attempt to meet the accusation with a sneer, its words rung in his very soul, and especially the closing clause, "*without faith in God, without love to his race.*"

Gabriel's head sank slowly on his breast, and his down-drawn brows hid his eyes from the light. He was thinking of other years; of the promise of his young manhood; of the dark realities of his maturer years. The judge spoke again.

"Gabriel Godlike, you are silent. You have no reply. In your own soul and before Heaven, you know that every word of the accusation is true. You cannot deny it. Your own soul and conscience convict you."

He paused; again the mocking sneer crossed Gabriel's lips, but a crowd of emotions were busy at his heart. The judge proceeded, in a measured tone. Every word fell distinctly upon the statesman's unwilling ears:

"Gabriel Godlike, you may smile at the idea of being held accountable to God and man, for the use which you have made of your talents in the last forty years, but there will come an hour when History will pass its judgment upon you; there will come an hour when God will demand of you the intellect which he has intrusted to your care. That hour will come. Then, what will be your answer to Almighty God?" "Lord, thou didst intrust me with superior intellect, to be used for the good of my brothers of the human family; and after a life of sixty years, I can truly say, I have never once

used that intellect for the elevation of mankind, and have never once failed, when appetite or ambition tempted, to squander it in the basest lusts." What a record will this be for history; what an answer to be rendered to Almighty God!

"Gabriel Godlike! Great men are placed upon earth, as the prophets and apostles of the poor. It is their vocation to speak the wrongs which the poor suffer, but are unable to tell; it is their mission to find the deepest thought which God has implanted in the breast of the age, and to carry that thought into action, or die. What has been the thought struggling in the bosom of the last fifty years? A thought vast as the providence of God, which, whether called by the name of Social Progress, or Social Re-organization, or by whatsoever name, still looks forward to the day when social misery will be annihilated; when the civilization will no longer show itself only in the awful contrast of the few, immersed in superfluous wealth,—of the many, immersed in poverty, in crime, in despair; a day, when in truth, the gospel of the New Testament will no longer be the hollow echo of the sounding-board above the pulpit, but an every-day verity, carried with deeds along all the ways of life, and manifested in the physical comfort as well as the moral elevation of all men.

"Something like this has been the thought of the last fifty—yes, of the last hundred years. It was the secret heart of our own Revolution. It was the great truth, whose features you may read even beneath the blood-red waves of the French Revolution. And in the nineteenth century this thought has called into action legions of noble-hearted men, who have earnestly endeavored to carry it into action. It has had its confessors, its saints, its martyrs.

"Gabriel Godlike! In the course of your long career, what have you done to aid the development of this thought? Alas! alas! Look back upon your life! In all your career, not one brave blow for man—your brother—not one, not one! As a lawyer, the hired vassal of any wealthy villain, or class of villains; as a legislator, not a statesman, but always the paid special pleader of heartless monopoly and godless capital; as a man, your intellect always towers among the

stars, while your moral character sinks beneath the kennel's mud! Such has been your life; such is the use to which you have bent your powers. Like the sublime egotist, Napoleon Bonaparte, you regarded the world as a world without a God, and mankind as the mere creatures of your pleasure and your sport. If the poor wretch, who, driven mad by hunger, steals a loaf of bread, is branded as a CRIMINAL, and adjudged to darkness and chains, by what name, Gabriel Godlike, shall we call *you*? what judgment shall we pronounce upon your head?"

The judge arose, and with his face shaded from the light, and his white hairs falling to his shoulders, he extended his hand toward the CRIMINAL.

There was a blush of *shame* upon Gabriel's downcast forehead; shame, mingled with suppressed rage.

"Shall we adjudge you to the lash?" and the judge looked first to Gabriel, then to the giant negro by his side.

Godlike raised his head; Esther shuddered as she beheld his look.

"The lash!" he echoed,—"*No, by —!* The man does not live who dares speak of such a thing."

"I live, and I speak of it," responded the judge, calmly. "You forget that you are in my power; and, as you are well aware, (it is a maxim upon which you have acted all your life,) '*MIGHT MAKES RIGHT.*' And why should you shudder at the mention of the lash? What is the torture, the disgrace of the lash, compared with the torture and disgrace which your deeds have inflicted upon thousands of your fellow men?"

Godlike uttered a frightful oath.—"You will drive me mad!" and he ground his teeth in impotent rage. It was a pitiful condition for a great statesman.

"No, no; the lash is too light a punishment for a criminal of your magnitude. Prisoner, stand up and hear the sentence of the court!"

Gabriel had a powerful will, but the will which spoke in the voice of that old man, his judge, was more powerful than his own. Reluctantly he arose to his feet, his broad chest panting and heaving beneath its scarlet attire.

"Unbind his arms." The masked attend-

ants obeyed. Gabriel's hands were free. "Secure him, at the first sign of resistance or of disobedience."

The judge calmly proceeded—

"Gabriel Godlike, hear the sentence of the court. You will affix your own proper signature to two documents, which will now be presented to you. After which you are free."

Gabriel could not repress an ejaculation. The simplicity of the sentence struck him with astonishment.

"Hand the prisoner the first document, which he may read," said the judge. Pale and trembling, Esther advanced, and, passing the table, placed a paper in the hands of Godlike, which he read :

"NEW YORK, Dec. 24th, 1844.

"The undersigned, Gabriel Godlike, hereby acknowledges that he was this day detected in the act of attempting a gross outrage upon the person of Esther Royalton, whom he had inveigled to a house of improper report, No. —, — street, New York : an outrage which, investigated before a court of law, would justly consign him to the State's Prison.

"Signed in presence of {

No words can picture the rage which corugated Godlike's visage as he perused this singular document.

"No, I will not sign !"—he fixed his flaming eyes upon Esther's pallid face—"not if you rend me into fragments."

"Esther," said the judge, calmly, "call the gentlemen from the neighboring apartment. Tell them that the purpose for which I summoned them will be explained in this room."

Esther cast a glance upon Godlike's flushed visage, and moved to the door,—

"Stay ! I will—I will !" Shame and mortification choked his utterance. He advanced to the table and signed his name to the paper.

The judge drew his broad-brimmed hat deeper over his brows, and advanced to the table.—"I will witness your signature," he quietly observed, and signed a name which Godlike would have given five years of his life to have read.

"The second document rests on the table before you. The writing is concealed by a sheet of paper. You will sign without reading it. There is the place for your signature." And he pushed the concealed document across the table.

"This is too much,—it is infamous," said Godlike, between his teeth. "How do I know what I am signing ? I will not do it." He sank back doggedly in his chair ; the perspiration stood in thick beads upon his brow.

"Esther," (she lingered on the threshold, as the judge addressed her,) "tell Mr. Godlike's friends that he will be glad to see them."

Oh ! bitterly, in that moment, did the fallen statesman pay for the misdeeds of years ! As if urged from his seat by an influence beyond his control, he rose and advanced to the table, his brow deformed by the big veins of helpless rage, his eyes blood-shot with suppressed fury,—he signed his name. His hand trembled like a leaf.

"Now, now—am I free ?" he cried, beating the table with his clenched hand. "Have you done with me ?" He turned his gaze from Esther, who stood trembling on the threshold, to the judge, who, with his shadowed face, stood calm and composed before him.

"I will witness your signature," said the judge, and again signed that name, which Godlike, even amid his wrath, endeavored, and in vain, to read.

At the same instant he placed his hand upon the candle, and all was darkness. In less time than it takes to record it, Godlike was seized, pinioned and blindfolded.

"You will be taken to your dressing-room, in which you will resume your usual attire, after which, without questioning or seeing any one, you will quietly leave this house. As for the gentlemen whom I summoned to this house to look upon your disgrace, I will manage to dismiss them, without mentioning your name."

"And the papers which you have forced me to sign ?" interrupted Gabriel.

"Do not speak of force. There was no force save the compulsion of your own crimes. And I give you fair warning that those papers which you have signed here in

darkness, you will be asked to sign yet once again in broad daylight. Go, sir: for the present we have done with you."

And as in thick darkness he was led from the hall, trembling with rage and shame, the voice of the judge once more broke on his ears, but this time not addressed to him:

"Pity, good Lord! Pardon me, if I am wrong!"

It was the voice of earnest prayer.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BRIDAL CHAMBER.

It was the bridal chamber. A strange hour, and a strange bridal!

In the luxurious apartment, where Nameless and Frank first met, a Holy Bible was placed wide open upon a table, or altar, covered with a snow-white cloth. On either side of the book were placed wax candles, shedding their clear light around the room, upon the details of the place, and upon the gorgeous curtains of the marriage-bed.

Frank and Nameless joined hands beside that altar, before the opened Bible. Never had Frank's magnetic beauty shone with such peculiar power. She was clad in black velvet, her dark hair gathered plainly aside from her brow, and the white cross rose and fell with every throb of her bosom. Nameless wore the black tunic which, with his dark brown hair, threw his features into strong relief. The golden cross hung on his breast, over his heart. He was pale, as if with intense thought, but his large, gray eyes met the gaze of Frank, as though his soul was riveted there.

And thus they joined hands, near the morning hour.

The Rev. Dr. Bulgin stood a little in the background, his broad red face glowing in the light. His cardinal's attire thrown aside, he appeared in sleek black, with the eternal white cravat about his neck. There was the flush of champagne upon the good doctor's florid face.

Behind Nameless stood Colonel Tarleton, dressed as the hidalgo, his right hand grasping a roll of paper, raised to his mouth, and his eyes gazing fixedly from beneath his down-drawn brows. It was the moment of his life.

"Once married and the way is clear!" he thought. "To think of it—after twenty-one years my hand grasps the prize!"

"We will walk through life together," said Frank, pressing the hand of Nameless.

"And devote our wealth to the elevation of the unfortunate and the fallen!" he responded, as a vision of future good gave new fire to his eye. And then he pressed his hand to his forehead, for his temples throbbed. A vivid memory of every event of his past life started up suddenly before his soul, every event invested with the familiar faces, the well-known voices of other days. He raised his eyes to the face of Frank, and the singular influence which seemed to invest her like an atmosphere, again took possession of him. It was not the influence of passion, nor the spell of her mere loveliness, although her person was voluptuously moulded, and the deep red in the center of her rich brown cheek, told the story of a warm and passionate nature; but it was as though her very soul, embodied in her lustrous eyes, encircled and possessed his own.

Was it love, in the common acceptation of the word? Was it fascination? Was it the result of sympathy between two lives, each of which had been made the sport of a dark and singular destiny?

"Had not we better go on?" said Dr. Bulgin, mildly. "Summoned to this house to celebrate these nuptials at this unusual hour, I feel somewhat fatigued with the duties of the day," and he winked at Tarleton.

"Proceed," said Tarleton, pressing the right hand, with the roll of paper to his lip.

The marriage service was deliberately said in the rich, bold voice of the eloquent Dr. Bulgin. The responses were duly made. The ring was placed upon the finger of the bride, and the white cross sparkled in the light, as it rose with the swell of her proud bosom.

"Husband," she whispered, as their lips met, "I have been sacrificed to others, but I never loved but you, and I will love you till I die." And she spoke the truth.

"Wife!"—he called that sacred name in a low and softened voice,—“let the past be forgotten. Arisen from the graves of our past lives, it is our part to begin life anew.”

And his tone was that of truth and enthusiasm.

"My son!"—Tarleton started forward and clasped Nameless by the hand,—"*Gulian*, my son, let the past be forgotten,—forgiven, and let us look only to the future! The proudest aspiration of my life is fulfilled!"

Nameless returned his grasp with a cordial pressure; but at the same instant a singular sensation crept like a chill through his blood. Was the presence of the dead father near at the moment when his son joined hands with the false brother?

"Here, my boy," continued Tarleton, laughingly, as he spread forth upon the table the roll of paper which he had held to his lip; "sign this, and we will bid you good night. It's a mere matter of form, you know. Nay, Frank, you must not see it; you women know nothing of these matters of business." Motioning his daughter back, he placed pen and ink before Nameless, and then quietly arranged his dark whiskers and smoothed his black hair; and yet his hand trembled.

Nameless took the pen, and bent over the table and read:—

DECEMBER 24, 1844.

TO DR. MARTIN FULMER:—

This day I transfer and assign to my wife, Frances Van Huyden, all my right, title, and interest in the estate of my deceased father, Gulian Van Huyden; and hereby promise, on my word of honor, to hold this transfer sacred at all times, and to make it binding (if requested), by a document drawn up according to the forms of law.

Nameless dipped the pen in the ink, and was about to sign, when Frank suddenly drew the paper from beneath his hand. She read it with a kindling cheek and flashing eye.

"For shame!" she cried, turning to her father, "for shame!" and was about to rend it in twain, when Nameless seized her wrist, and took the paper from her hand.

"Nay, Frank, I will sign," he exclaimed, and put the pen to the paper.

"O, father," whispered Frank, with a glance of burning indignation, "this is too much—" Her words were interrupted by the sudden opening of the door.

"Is there no way of escape,—none?"—a voice was heard exclaiming these words, in tones of fright and madness,—"*Is there no way of escape from this abode of ruin and death?*"

The pen dropped from the hand of Nameless. That voice congealed the blood in his veins.

Turning his head over his shoulders, he saw the speaker,—while the whole scene swam for a moment before his eyes,—saw that young countenance, now wild with affright, on which was imprinted the stainless beauty of a pure and virgin soul.

"The grave has given up its dead!" he cried, and staggered toward the phantom which rose between him and the door; the phantom of a young and beautiful woman, clad in the faded garments of poverty and toil; her unbound hair streaming wildly about her face, her eyes dilating with terror, her clasped hands strained against her agitated bosom.

"The grave has given up its dead," he cried. "*Mary!*" O, how that name awoke the memories of other days! "*Mary!* when last I saw thee, thou wert beside my coffin, while my soul communed with thine." And again he called that sacred name.

It was no phantom, but a living and beautiful woman. She saw his face,—she uttered a cry,—she knew him.

"*Gulian!*" she cried, and spread forth her arms. Not one thought that he had died and been buried,—she saw him living,—she knew him,—he was before her,—that was all. "*Husband!*"

He rushed to her embrace, but even as his arms were outspread to clasp her form, he fell on his knees. His head rested against her form, his hands clasped her knees. The emotion of the moment had been too much for him; he had fainted at her feet.

She knelt beside him, and took his head to her bosom, and pressed her lips against his death-like forehead, and then her loosened hair hid his face from the light. She wept aloud.

"*Husband!*"

At this moment turn your gaze to the marriage altar. Dr. Bulgin is still there, gazing in dumb surprise, first upon the face of Frank, then upon her father. It is hard

to tell which looks most ghastly and death-like. Tarleton looks like a man who has been stricken by a thunderbolt. Frank rests one hand upon the marriage altar, and raises the other to her forehead. For a moment death seems busy at her heart.

With a desperate effort, Tarleton rallies his presence of mind.

"Good evening, or, rather, good morning, doctor," he says, and then points to the door. The reverend gentleman takes the hint, and quietly fades from the room.

At times like this, one moment of resolve is worth an age. Tarleton's face is colorless, but he sees, with an ominous light in his eyes, the way clear before him. He turns aside for a moment, to the cabinet yonder, and from a small drawer, takes a slender vial, filled with a colorless liquid; then quietly glides to his daughter's side.

"Frank!"—she raises her head,—their eyes meet. He holds the vial before her face—"your husband has fainted; this will revive him." That singular smile discloses his white teeth. Frank reads his meaning at a glance. O, the unspeakable agony,—the conflict between two widely different emotions, which writhes over her face!

"No, father, no! It must not be," and she pushes the vial from her sight.

His words, uttered rapidly, and in a whisper, come through his set teeth,—*"It must be,—the game cannot be lost now; in twelve hours, you know, this vial will do its work, and leave no sign!"*

An expression which he cannot read, crosses her face. A moment of profound and harrowing thought,—a glance at the kneeling girl, who hides in her flowing hair, the face of her unconscious husband.

"Be it so," Frank exclaims, "give me the vial; I will administer it." Taking the vial from her father's hand, she advances to the cabinet, and for a moment bends over the open drawer.

And the next instant she is kneeling beside Nameless and the weeping girl.

"Mary!" whispers Frank, and the young wife raises her face from her husband's forehead, and they gaze in each other's face,—a contrast which you do not often behold. The face of Frank, dark-hued at other times, and red with passion on the cheek and lip, but

now, lividly pale, and only expressing the intensity of her organization in the lightning glance of the eyes,—the face of Mary, although touched by want and sorrow, bearing the look of a guileless, *happy* soul in every outline, and shining all the love of a pure woman's nature from the large, clear eyes. It was as though night and morning had met together.

"Mary!" said Frank,—her hand trembling, but her purpose firm,—*"your husband will die unless aid is rendered at once. Let me revive him."*

Before Mary can frame a word in reply, she places the vial to the lips of Nameless, and does not remove her hand until the last drop is emptied. Tarleton yonder watches the scene, with his head drooping on his breast, and his hand raised to his chin.

"He will revive presently," Frank exclaims with a smile.

"God bless you, generous woman,——"

But Frank does not wait to receive her thanks.

Returning to her father's side,—*"Come, let us leave them, now,"* she whispers; *"now that your request is obeyed."*

"But he must not die in this house."

"O, you will have time, ample time to remove him before the vial has done its work,"—a bitter smile crosses her face,—*"Leave them together for an hour at least. Let them at least enjoy one hour of life, before his eyes are closed in death; only one hour, father!"*

She takes her father by the hand, and hurries him from the room,—let us not dare to read the emotions now contending on her corpse-like face. From that room, which was to have been her bridal chamber,—the starting-point of a new and happy life!

"I must now see after the *other*," Tarleton soliloquizes, as he crossed the threshold. *"This one removed, the other must be ready for to-morrow."*

And Frank and her father leave the room.

The chest of Nameless began to heave,—his eyes gradually unclosed. With a vacant glance he surveyed the apartment.

"It is a dream," he said.

But there were arms about his neck, kisses on his lips, a warm cheek laid next to his own. Certainly not the clasp, the kiss, and the pressure of a dream.

"Not in a dream, Carl," she said, calling him by the name which he had borne in other days.

"Carl? Who calls me Carl?"

"Not in a dream, Carl, but living and restored to me."

Even as he lay in her arms, his head resting on her young bosom, he raised his eyes and beheld her face.

"Mary!"

"Thou art my husband!"

"Thou art my wife!"

That moment was a full recompense for all they had suffered, yes, for a lifetime of suffering and anguish. They forgot everything,—the dark past,—the strange chance or providence which had brought them together,—they only felt that they were living and in each other's arms.

At sight of the pure, holy face of Mary, all consciousness of the fascination which Frank had held over him, passed like the memory of a dream from the soul of Nameless.

"O, Mary, wife, thou art living,—God is good," he said, as she bent over him, baptizing his lips with kisses, and his face with tears. "Do you remember that hour, when I lay in the coffin, while you bent over me, and our souls talked to each other, without the medium of words: 'you have seen him for the last time,' they said; 'not for the last time,—we will meet again was your reply.' And now we have met! Mary—wife! let us never accuse Providence again, for God is good!"

Moment of joy too deep for words.

Drink every drop of the cup, now held to your lips, Carl Raphael! For even, as the arms of your young wife are about your neck, even as her young bosom throbs against your cheek, and you count the beatings of her heart, death spreads his shadow over you. The poison is in your veins,—your young life is about to set in this world forever.

CHAPTER V.

THE SCARLET CHAMBER.

HAVING once more resumed the attire of Leo the Tenth,—scarlet robe, cap, with nodding plumes and cross with golden chain;

Dr. Bulgin was hurrying along a dark passage on his way to the Scarlet Chamber, where his nephew awaited him. The Scarlet Chamber was at the end of the passage; as he drew near it, the Doctor's reflections grew more pleasant and comfortable. It may be as well to make record, that after he had left the Bridal Chamber, he had refreshed himself with a fresh bottle of champagne.

"Odd scene that in the room of Tarleton's daughter! Very dramatic,—wish I knew what it all meant. However my 'nephew,' a rich chuckle resounded from the depths of his chest—"my nephew' awaits me, and after another bottle in the Scarlet Chamber, I must see *her* safely home. It is not such a bad world after all."

Thus soliloquizing he arrived at the end of the passage, and his head was laid against the door of the Scarlet Chamber.

"Cozy place,—bottle of wine,—good company—"

"Hush!" whispered a voice.

"That you Julia? What are you doing out here in the dark?" he wound his arms about his nephew's waist. "Waiting for me?"

"Do not,—do not," she gasped, struggling to free herself from his arms,—"*Do not enter,—*"

"Tush, child! you're nervous,—"*and despite the struggles, he gathered his arm closer around her waist, pushed open the door and entered the Scarlet Room.*

A quiet little apartment, lighted by a hanging lamp, whose mild beams softened the glare of the rich scarlet hangings. There was a sofa covered with red velvet, a table, on which stood a bottle, with two long necked glasses, and from an interval in the hangings, gleamed the vision of a snow-white couch. Altogether, a place worthy the private devotions of Leo the Tenth, or of any gentleman of his exquisite taste, and eccentric piety."

"What's the matter child? You're pale, and have been crying,—"*exclaimed Bulgin, as he bore her over the threshold, and paused for a moment to gaze upon her face, which was bare to the light, the cap having fallen from her brow. As he spoke his back was to the sofa.*

"There," was the only word which she

had power to frame, and bursting into tears, she pointed over his shoulders to the sofa.

Somewhat surprised, Dr. Bulgin turned on his heel, the white plumes nodding over his bulky face, and,—

There are some scenes which must be left to the imagination.

On the sofa, sat three grave gentlemen, clad in solemn black, their severe features, rendered even more stern and formal, by the relief of a white cravat. Each of these gentlemen held his hat in one hand, and in the other a cane, surmounted by a head of white bone.

As Bulgin turned, the three gentlemen quietly rose, and said politely, with one voice :

"Good morning Dr. Bulgin."

And then as quietly sat down again.

The Doctor looked as though he had been lost in a railroad collision. He was paralyzed. He had not even the presence of mind, to release the grasp which gathered the young form of his lovely nephew to his side.

The exact position of affairs, at this crisis, will be better understood, when you are informed, that in these three gentlemen, the Rev. Dr. Bulgin recognized Mr. Watkins, Mr. Potts, and Mr. Burns, the leading members, perchance Deacons of his wealthy congregation. The one with the slight form, and short stiff gray, hair,—Watkins. Mr. Potts, is a small man, with a bald head, and the slightest tendency in the world to corpulence. Mr. Burns is tall and lean, with angular features, and an immense nose. Altogether, as grave and respectable men as you will meet in a days walk, from Wall Street, to the head of Broadway. But what do they in the TEMPLE, at any time, but especially at this unusual hour ?

That was precisely the question which troubled Bulgin.

"W-e-l-l Gentle-m-e-n," he said, not exactly knowing what else to say.

To which they all responded with a singular unanimity,—*"W-e-l-l D-o-c-t-o-r !"*

"Did not I,—did not I,—tell,—tell you not to come in here ?" sobbed the nephew,—that is Julia.

Mr. Watkins arose and passed his hand through his stiff gray hair,—

"Allow me to compliment you upon the becoming character of your costume !" and sat down again.

Then Mr. Potts, whose bald head shone in the light as he rose,—

"And allow me to congratulate you upon the character of this house, and especially the elegant seclusion of this chamber." And Mr. Potts sat down.

Mr. Burns' lean form next ascended, and his nose seemed to increase in size, as he projected it in a low bow,—

"And allow me,—" what a deep voice ! "to congratulate you upon the society of your companion, who becomes her male attire exceedingly." And Mr. Burns gravely resumed his seat.

"Did—I—not—tell, tell—you,—n-o-t to come in," sobbed Julia.

The Doctor's face was partly hidden by his plumes, but that portion of it which was visible, resembled nothing so much in color, as a boiled lobster.

It now occurred to the Doctor, to release his grasp upon the waist of Julia. He left her to herself, and she fell on her knees, burying her face in her hands. As for the Doctor himself, he *slid* slowly into a chair, never once removing his gaze, from the three gentlemen on the sofa. Thus confronting them in his cardinal's attire, with the white plumes nodding over his forehead, he seemed, in the language of the chairman of a town meeting, "to be waiting for this here meeting to proceed to business."

There was a pause,—a painful and embarrassing pause.

The three sat like statues, only that Mr. Potts rubbed the end of his nose, with the top of his cane.

Why could not Dr. Bulgin, after the manner of the Genii in the Arabian Nights, disappear through the floor, in a cloud of mist and puff of perfume ?

"Well,—gentlemen,—" said Bulgin at last, for the dead silence began to drive him mad, and made him hear all sorts of noises, in his ears,—*"what are you doing in this place, at this unusual hour !"*

This was a pointed question, to which Mr. Burns felt called upon to reply. He rose, and again the nose loomed largely, as he bowed,—

"Precisely the question which we were about to ask you," he said, and was seated again.

Mr. Potts took his turn :

"For a long time we have heard rumors," he said rising, "rumors concerning our pastor, of a painful nature. And although we did not credit them, yet they troubled us. Last night, however, we each received a letter, from an unknown person, who informed us, that in case we visited this house, between midnight and daybreak, we would discover our pastor, in company with the wife of an aged member of our church. As the letter inclosed the password, by which admittance is gained to this place, we took counsel upon the matter, and concluded to come. And,—"

"And,—" interrupted Watkins, rising solemnly, and extending the forefinger of his right hand, toward Bulgin, "and *now we see!*"

"And now we *see!*" echoed Mr. Watkins, absently shutting one eye, as he regarded Bulgin's face.

"We *all* see," remarked Mr. Potts resuming his seat, and then as if to clinch the matter—"and with *our own eyes!*"

Bulgin never before fully appreciated the meaning of the word "embarrassed." His wits had never failed him before; would they fail him now? He made an effort—

"Why, gentlemen, the truth is, I was summoned to this house, on professional duty,—"

he began.

"Mr. Potts groaned; they all groaned.

"In that costume?" asked Potts.

"And with *madam* there?" asked Watkins.

"Pro-fessi-o-n-a-l d-u-t-y!" thus Watkins in a hollow voice.

'Professional duty' would not do; evidently not. Foiled on this tack, the good Doctor tried another :

"The truth is," he began, with remarkable composure,—"I had been informed that Mrs. Parkins here,—"

he pointed to the sobbing "nephew" otherwise Julia, and drew his chair nearer to the three, gradually softening his voice into a confidential whisper,—

"Mrs. Parkins, the young wife of my aged friend Parkins, had been so far led away by the insinuating manners of a young man of fashion, as to promise to meet him

in this improper place. Desirous to save the wife of my aged friend at all hazards, I assumed this dress,—the one which her seducer was to wear,—and came to this place, and,—rescued her. Do you understand?"

That "do you understand," was given in one of his most insinuating whispers; "and thus you see I periled my reputation in order to save,—*her!*"

What effect this story would have had upon the three, had it been suffered to travel unquestioned, it is impossible to tell. But low and softly as the Doctor whispered, he was overheard by his "nephew," otherwise, Julia.

"Don't lie, Doctor," she said quite tartly as she knelt on the floor. "I was not led away by any young man of fashion, and I did *not* come here to meet any young man of fashion. I *was* led away by *you*, and I came here with *you*."

Thus speaking, Julia rose from her knees, and came to the Doctor's side, thus presenting to the sight of the three gentlemen, the figure of a very handsome woman, dressed in blue frock coat and trowsers. She was somewhat tall, luxuriously proportioned, with a fine bust and faultless arms, her hair, chestnut brown, and her complexion a delicate mingling of "strawberries and cream." "A dem foine woman, the exquisite of Broadway would have called her. There was not so much of intellect in her face, as there was health, youth, passion. Married to a man of her own age, and whom she loved, she doubtless would have risen above temptation, and always proved a faithful wife, an affectionate mother. But sold by her parents, in the mockery of a marriage, to a man old enough to be her father,—perchance her grandfather,—transferred at the age of seventeen, like a bale of merchandise, to the possession of one whom she could not revere as a father, or love as a husband,—we behold her before us, the victim of the reverend tempter."

"You know, Doctor, that you led me away, you know you did," she cried, sobbing, "now did you not?" She bent down her head and looked into his face. "You can't say you didn't. No more he can't," and she turned in mute appeal to the three gentlemen.

"Evidently *not*," exclaimed Mr. Potts, who in his younger days had been somewhat wild, "that cock won't fight!" he continued, using a figure of speech, derived from the experience of said younger days.

As for the Doctor, he mentally wished the beautiful Mrs. Julia Parkins in Kamschatka.

"Never have an affair with a *fool* again, as long as I live!" he muttered.

"And while you soothed my poor old husband, on that doctrinal point; you,—you," sobbed Julia, "told me how handsome I was, and what a shame it was for me, to be jailed up with an old man like that. Yes, you said *jailed*. And how it was no harm for me to love you, and that it was no harm for you to love me. And I heard you preach, and you came to the house, day after day, and,—” poor Julia could not go on for sobbing.

The three gentlemen groaned.

As for Dr. Bulgin, he calmly rose from his seat, and taking the corkscrew from the tray on the table, proceeded quietly to draw the cork of a bottle of champagne. This accomplished, he filled a long necked glass to the brim with foaming Heidsieck.

"Jig's up, gentlemen," he said, bowing to the three, as he tossed off the glass, and regarded them with a smile of matchless impudence,—“Jig's up!”

"What does he mean by 'jig's up'?" asked Mr. Burns of Mr. Potts, in a very hollow voice.

"He means," returned Bulgin himself, straightening up, and rubbing his broad chest with his fat hand, "that the jig is up. You've found me out. There's no use of lying about it. And now that you have found me out,—” he paused, filled another glass, and contemplated the three, over its brim,—“allow me to ask, what do you intend to do?”

He took a sip from the glass. The three were thunderstruck.

"Cool!" exclaimed Mr. Potts, punching the toe of his boot with his cane.

"You *can't* expose me," continued Bulgin, as he took another sip: "that would create *scandal*, you know, and hurt the church more than it would me."

The rich impudence of the Doctor's look, would "have made a cat laugh."

"We *will* expose you!" cried Watkins, hollowly, with an emphatic nodding of his nose. "The truth demands it. As long as you are suffered to prow about in this way, no man's wife, sister, or daughter is safe."

"No man's wife, sister, or daughter is safe!" echoed Mr. Potts.

"Did I ever tempt *your* wife, Burns?" coolly asked Bulgin,—Burns winced, for his wife was remarkably plain.

"Or your sister, Potts?" Potts colored to the eyes; his sister was a miracle of plainness.

"Or your daughter, Watkins?" Watkins felt the thrust, for his daughter was as plain as Burns' wife and Potts' sister combined.

"Be assured I never will," continued Bulgin—"now, what do you intend to do? Expose me and ruin this poor creature here?" "Don't call me a poor creature, you brute!" indignantly interrupted Julia. "Publish me in the papers, dismiss me from the church, give my name to be a by-word in the mouths of scoffers and infidels? Gravely, gentlemen, is that what you mean to do? Let us reflect a little. You pay me a good salary; I preach you good sermons. Granted. My practice may be a little loose, but, is not my doctrine orthodox? Where can you get a preacher who will draw larger crowds? And is it worth your while, merely on account of a little weakness like this,"—he pointed to Julia,—“to disgrace me and the church together?”

The Doctor saw by their faces, that he had made an impression. They conversed together in low tones, and with much earnestness. Meanwhile, Julia sobbed and Bulgin took another glass of champagne.

"Will you solemnly promise,"—Burns knocked his cane on the floor, and emphasised each word, "to be more careful of your conduct in the future, in case we overlook the present offense?"

"Cordially, gentlemen, and upon my honor!" cried Bulgin, rising from his seat, "I will take Julia quietly home, and to-morrow commence life anew. I give you my hand upon it."

He advanced, and shook them by the hand.

"If you keep your word, this will suit me," said Burns, with gloomy cordiality.

"And me," echoed Watkins.

"And me," responded Potts.

"But it will not suit me!" cried a strange voice, which started the whole company to their feet. The voice came from behind the hangings which concealed the bed. It was a firm voice, and deep as a well.

"It will not suit me, I say," and from the hangings the unknown speaker emerged with a measured stride.

He was a tall man, somewhat bent in the shoulders, and wore a long cloak, of an antique fashion, which was fastened to his neck by a golden clasp. His white hairs were covered by an old-fashioned fur-cap; his eyes hidden by large green glasses, and the furred collar of his cloak, concealed the lower part of his face. An aged man, evidently, as might be seen by his snow-white hair, and the wrinkles on the exposed portion of his face, but his step was strong and measured, and his voice firm and clear.

"And who are you?" cried Bulgin, recovering from his surprise. His remark was chorused by the others.

"A pew-holder in your church," emphatically exclaimed the cloaked individual. "Let that suffice you. 'Gentlemen,'—turning his back on Bulgin, he lifted his cap and exposed his forehead to the three gentlemen,—"you know me?"

With one impulse, they pronounced a name; and it was plainly to be seen that they respected that name, and its owner.

"This compromise does not suit me," said the cloaked gentleman, turning abruptly to Bulgin. "You are a villain, sir. It is men like you who bring the Gospel of Christ into contempt. You are an atheist, sir. It is men like you who fill the world with infidels. I have borne with you long enough. I will bear with you no longer. You shall be exposed, sir."

This style of attack, as impetuous as a charge of bayonets, evidently startled the good Doctor.

"Who are you?" he asked, sneeringly.

"I am the man who wrote the letters to these three gentlemen, yesterday," dryly responded the cloaked gentleman.

"This is a conspiracy," growled Bulgin. "Take care, sir! There is a law for conspirators against character and reputation—"

"Baugh!" responded the old gentleman, shrugging his shoulders; and then he beckoned with his hand, toward the recess in which stood the bed. "Come in," he said, "it is time."

Two persons emerged from the recess; one, an old man, of portly form, and mild, good-humored face—now, alas! dark and corrugated with suppressed wrath; the other, a slender woman, with pale face, and large, intellectual eyes,—and a baby, sleeping on her bosom.

Bulgin uttered an oath.

"My wife!—her father!" was all he could utter.

"I have summoned you from your home in the country," said the cloaked gentleman, "to meet me at this house at this unusual hour, to show you the husband and son-in-law in his festival attire, and in company with his paramour.—Look at him! Isn't he beautiful?"

The wife rushed forward, with an indignant glance—

"Let me see the woman who has stolen my husband's affections," she said.

The cloaked gentleman interposed between her and Julia,—

"Softly, my good lady; this poor child must not be disgraced;" and, turning to Julia, he whispered: "Hide your face with your kerchief, and hurry from the room. There is a carriage at the door; it will bear you home. Away now!"

"The nephew" did not need a second invitation. Hands over her face, she glided from the room.

Bulgin now found himself in this position:—behind him, Watkins, Burns and Potts; on his right, the cloaked gentleman; on his left, his weeping wife, with her baby; in front, the burly form of his father-in-law, who, clad in the easy costume of a country gentleman, seemed too full of wrath to trust himself with words.

"Oh! husband, how could you—" began the wife.

"Is that your wife, sir?" thundered the father-in-law. "Answer me! Is that your wife?"

"It is," answered Bulgin, retreating a step. "Allow me to explain,—"

"Is that your child, sir?" thundered the

enraged old gentleman. "Answer me! Is that your child?"

"It—is—" and Bulgin retreated another step.

"Then, what in the devil do you do in a place like this?—Hey?—Answer me!—answer me!"

The father-in-law was too much enraged to say any more. So he proceeded to settle the affair in his own way. He did not threaten "divorce;"—did not even mention "separate maintenance." Nothing of the kind. His course was altogether different. From beneath his capacious buff waistcoat, he drew forth a cow-hide—a veritable cow-hide,—and grasped it firmly.

"Don't strike a man of my cloth," cried Bulgin.

The only answer was a blow across the face, which left its livid mark on the nose and cheeks. The good Doctor bawled and ran. The father-in-law pursued, giving the cow-hide free play over the head and shoulders of the Doctor. And the wife, with baby on her bosom, pursued her father,— "Don't, father, don't!" Thus, the chase led round the room; the howls of the Doctor, the blows of the whip, the falling of chairs, and trampling of feet, forming, altogether, a striking chorus. And to add the feather to the camel's back, the baby lifted up its voice in the midst of the scene. Mr. Potts, Mr. Burns, and Mr. Watkins, mounted on the sofa, so that they might not be in the way.

As for the cloaked gentleman, leaning against the door, he laughed,—yes, perhaps for the first time in thirty years.

After making the circuit of the room three or four times, the scarlet attire of the Rev. Dr. Bulgin hung in rags upon his back; and the old man, red in the face, bathed in perspiration, and out of breath, sank panting in a chair.

He glanced at his daughter, who sat weeping in a corner, and then at the Rev. Doctor, who, with the figure of the letter X welled across his face, was rubbing his bruises in another corner.

"Now, sir, if ever I catch you at anything of this kind, if I don't lick you, my name aint Jenkins!"

CHAPTER VI.

BANK-STOCK AT THE BAR.

THE Court of Ten Millions was once more in session. The judge was once more in his seat; his form enveloped in the coat with many capes, his features shadowed by the hat with ample brim. But the beautiful Esther was no longer on his left, nor the giant negro on his right. The great statesman, with the somber brow and masquerade attire of Roderick Borgia, no longer sat in the seat of the criminal. The scene was altogether changed, although the candle on the table still shed its beams around that room, whose black hangings were fringed with gold, and whose gloomy ceiling represented a stormy sky, with the sun struggling among its clouds.

In the seat of the criminal sat Israel Yorke, the financier; his diminutive form, clad in the scarlet Turkish jacket and blue trowsers, contrasting somewhat oddly with his business-like face, and with the general appearance of the scene. Israel was perplexed, for he shifted uneasily in the chair and clasped its arms with his hands, while his ferret-like eyes, now peering above, now below, but never through the glasses of his spectacles, roved incessantly from side to side. There sat the silent judge, under the gloomy canopy, his head bowed on his breast. There was the black table, on which stood the solitary candle, and over which were scattered, an inkstand, pen and paper, a book, and sundry other volumes, looking very much like ledger and day-book. On one side of the table, ranged against the wall, were six sturdy fellows, attired in coarse garments, with crape over their faces; and each man held a club in his brawny hand. And on the opposite side, also ranged against the wall like statues, were six more sturdy fellows, each one grasping a club with his strong right arm. They were dumb as stone; only their hard breathing could be heard;—evidently men of toil, who, on occasion, in a good cause, can strike a blow that will be felt.

Israel did not like this scene. A few moments since, kneeling beside a beautiful girl, whose young loveliness was helpless and in his power;—and now, a prisoner in

this nightmare sort of place, with the judge before him, and six sturdy fellows on either hand, waiting to do the judge's bidding! The contrast was too violent. Israel thought so; and—Israel felt anything but comfortable.

"Do they mean to murder me in this dismal den?" he ejaculated to himself. "Really, this way of doing business is exceedingly unbusiness-like. What would they say in Wall street to a scene like this?"

Here the voice of the judge was heard through the dead stillness:

"Israel Yorke, you are about to be put on trial for your crimes."

"My crimes?" ejaculated the little man, bounding from his seat. "Crimes!—What crimes have I committed?"

There, outspoke the sense of injured innocence! To be sure—what crimes had he committed? Had he ever stabbed a man, or put another man's name to paper, or stolen a loaf of bread? No,—indignantly—No! Israel Yorke was above all that. But how many robbers had he made, in the course of his career, by his banking speculations? how many forgers? how many murderers? how many honest men had he flung into the felon's cell? how many pure women had he transformed into walkers of the public streets? Ah! these are questions which Israel Yorke had rather not answer.

"Yes, your crimes, committed through a long course of years; not with the bravery and boldness of the highway robber, but with the cowardice and low cunning of the sneak and swindler, who robs within the letter of the law. Crimes committed, not upon the wealthy and the strong, but upon the weak, the poor, the helpless—the widow, by her fireless hearth—the orphan, by his father's grave. Oh, sir—we have just tried a bold, bad man; a colossal criminal, whose very errors wear something of the gloomy grandeur of the thunder-cloud. To put you on trial, after him, is like leaving the presence of Satan, his forehead yet bearing some traces of former splendor, to find oneself confronted by Mammon, that most abased of all the damned. Yes, sir,—an apology is due to human nature, by this court, for stooping so low as to put you on your trial. And yet, even you derive some

sort of consequence from the vast field of your crimes,—the wide-spread and infernal results of your life-long labors."

Israel crouched in his chair, as though he expected the ceiling to fall on him. "What d'ye mean by crimes?" he cried, grasping the arms of the chair with both hands;—"and what right have you to try me?"

The judge briefly but pointedly, and in a clear voice, which penetrated every nook of the chamber, explained the peculiar features of the court. Its power, backed by ten millions of silver dollars; its jurisdiction, over crimes committed by those who seek the fruits of labor, without its work, or who use the accident of wealth and social position to oppress or degrade man—their brother; its stern application to criminals, who, clad in wealth, had trampled all justice under foot of their own terse motto, "**MIGHT MAKES RIGHT.**"

The explanation of the judge was brief, but impressive. Israel began to feel conviction steal into his soul. "Might makes right!" Oh, how like the last nail in the coffin, are those simple words, to a wealthy scoundrel, who suddenly finds himself helpless in the grasp of a mightier power!

"Of—what—am—I—accused!" faltered Israel; thus recognising the jurisdiction of the court.

The judge answered him:

"Of every crime that can be committed by the man, who makes it his sole object in life to coin money out of the life and blood of the helpless and the poor;—and who pursues this object steadily, by day and night, for twenty years, with the untiring scent of the bloodhound on the track of blood. Survey your life for the last twenty years. You have appeared in various characters: as the trustee, as the executor, as the speculator, the landlord, and the financier.

He paused. Israel found himself listening with intense interest.

"As the trustee, to whom dying men, with their last breath, intrusted the heritage of the orphan, you have in every case, plundered the orphan out of bread, out of education, and cast him ignorant and helpless upon the world. How many orphans, given into your charge, with their heritage, now rot in the grave, or in the felon's dungeon?"

Your history is written in their blood. Do you,—” the voice of the judge sank low,—“do you remember one orphan, whom, when a little child, her father gave to your care, and whom, when grown to young womanhood, you robbed of her heritage? Do you remember the day on which she died, the tenant of a brothel?”

Once more the judge was silent, but Israel had no word of reply. As for the twelve listeners, they manifested their attention by an ominous murmur.

“As the landlord, it has not been your object to provide the poor with comfortable homes, in exchange for their hard-earned rent-money, but to pack as many human beings as you might, within the smallest compass of brick and mortar,—to herd creatures made in the image of the living God, in narrow rooms, dark courts, and pestilential alleys, as never beasts were herded,—and thus you have sowed death, you have bred the fever, the small-pox, the cholera,—but *you have made money.*”

Seated in the shadow of the velvet canopy, from which his voice resounded, the judge again was silent. Israel, dropping his eyes, imitated the silence of the judge. The murmur of the twelve listeners was now accompanied by the sound of their clubs grating against the floor.

“It is as a banker, however, that your appetite for money, made out of human blood, takes its intensest form of baseness. You started with a Savings Fund, chartered by a well-paid legislature, who transformed you into a president and board of directors, and divesting you of all responsibility, as a man, authorized you to coin money out of the blind confidence of the poor. Hard-working men, servant-girls, needle-women, and others of the poor, who gain their pittance by labor that never knows rest, until it sleeps in the grave, deposited that pittance in your hands. A pittance, mark you, not so remarkable for its amount, as for the fact, that it might, in some future hour, become bread to the starving, warmth to the freezing, home to the homeless. And how did you deal with the sacred trust? The earnings of the poor filled the coffers of your Savings Fund, until they counted over a hundred thousand dollars, and then, on the eve of a dreary

winter, the Savings Fund *failed*. That was all. *You did not fail*; oh, no; but the Savings Fund Corporation (into which a pliant legislature had transformed you),—it *failed*. And while you pocketed the hundred thousand dollars, you left the poor, who had trusted you, to starve, or beg, or die, as pleased them.”

Israel shaded his eyes with his hands; he seemed buried in profound thought.

“This was the corner-stone of your fortunes. Then the Savings Fund swindler grew into the banker. There were legislatures at Albany, at Trenton and at Harrisburgh, eager to do your bidding,—hungry to be bought. For every dollar of real value in your coffers, these legislatures, by their charters, gave you the privilege to create at least fifty paper dollars; in other words, to demand from the toiling people of the land, some millions of dollars’ worth of their labor, without any equivalent. Your banks grew; there were sham presidents and boards of directors, but you were the actual owner of them all; your paper was scattered broadcast over the land. It was in the hands of farmers and mechanics, of poor men and poor women, who had taken it in pay for hard labor; and all at once your banks *failed*. What became of the poor wretches who took your paper, is not known, but as for you, your capital of a hundred thousand now swelled into two millions of dollars. Let the poor howl! Had you not a press in your pay? Why should not the press be purchased, when legislatures are to be bought as so much merchandise?”

The judge paused, and after a moment resumed,—

“There was a clamor for a while, but you laughed in your sleeve, bought houses and lands,—dotted the city with pestilential dens, in which you crowded the poor, like insects in a festering carcass,—and after a time, raised your head once more as a banker. It was Harrisburgh, Albany or Trenton this time,—one of the three, or all of them,—which gave you the right to steal by law. You were now the owner (and behind the scenes, the wire-puller), of three banks. Last night you thought ‘the pear ripe.’ Your notes were once more scattered broadcast over the land. ‘It is a good time to fail,’ you thought,

and so last night, in the railroad cars (in order to give a color to your failure) you pretended to be robbed of seventy-one thousand dollars."

"Pretended to be robbed? I tell you I was robbed," cried Israel, half-rising from his seat,—“robbed by an old convict and his young accomplice."

"And this morning, in due course, your three banks stopped payment. All day long your victims lined the street, in front of your den of plunder; and to-night found you in this place, seeking for a time, the gratification of one lust in place of another. And now you are in the hands of those who, having 'THE MIGHT,' will do with you as your crimes deserve. 'Might makes right,' you know."

"But where is the proof of all this? Where are my accusers?" Israel's teeth chattered as he spoke.

"Do you ask for accusers? What accusers are needed more powerful than those voices which now,—and even your seared conscience, must hear them,—arise against you from the silence of the grave and the darkness of the dungeon cell?"

Israel tried hard to brace his nerves against the force of words like these,—against the tone in which they were spoke,—but he shook from head to foot, as though he had been seized with an ague-fit.

"Think for a moment of Cornelius Bermen, whom, by the grossest fraud, you stripped of property and home, leaving himself and his only child to sink heart-broken into the grave. And once you called yourself his *friend*. Think, also, of your instrument, Buggles, whose persecution of the artist, instigated by you, provoked a brave and honest youth into murder, and consigned him to the felon's death! Do you ask for accusers?"

"Cornelius Bermen!" faltered Israel, as if thinking aloud.

"Do you ask for proofs? Behold them on the table before you. For years your course has been tracked, your crimes counted, and the hour of your punishment fixed. And the hour has come! On the table before you are proofs of all your crimes, proofs that would weigh you down in a convict's chains before any court of law. There are the secrets which you thought safely locked up in your fire-proof, or buried in the forgotten

past,—secrets connected with the history of long years, with your transactions in Harrisburgh, Trenton, Albany,—with all your schemes from the very dawning of your infamous career."

"Can Fetch, the villain, have betrayed me?" and Israel sank back helplessly in the huge arm-chair;—"or, is this man only trying to bully me into some confession or other?"

"Israel Yorke! the devotion with which you, for long years, have pursued your object,—to coin money out of human blood,—has only been exceeded by the devotion of those who have followed you at every step of the way, and for years, singled you out as the victim of avenging justice."

"But what do you intend to do with me?" cried Yorke, now shivering from head to foot with terror.

"In the first place, you will sign a paper, stating the truth, viz: that you have ample means to redeem every dollar of your notes, and that you will redeem them to-day, and henceforth at your office."

"But I have not the funds," Israel began, but he was sternly interrupted by the judge: "It is false! you have the funds. Independent of the seventy-one thousand dollars, of which you say you were robbed, you can, at any moment, command a million dollars. The proofs are on the table before you. You *must* redeem your notes."

"And suppose I consent to sign such a paper?" hesitated the Financier.

"Then you must sign another paper, the contents of which you will not know until some future time," continued the judge, very quietly.

"If I do it, may I be ——!" screamed Israel, bouncing from his seat.

"It is well. You may go," calmly remarked the judge. "You are free; these gentlemen will see you from this house, and attend you until bank hours, when they will have the honor of presenting you to the holders of your notes, who will, doubtless, gather in respectable numbers in front of your banking house."

Israel was free, but the twelve gentlemen, with clubs, gathered round him, anxious to escort him safely on his way.

"Come, my dear little Turk, we are ready,"

said one of the number, with a very gruff voice, laying a hand,—it was such a hard hand,—on the shoulders of the Financier, "We're a-dyin' to go with you; ain't we, boys?"

"Dyin' ain't the word,—we're starvin' to death to be alone with the gentleman in blue trousers," responded another.

Israel bit his lips in silent rage.

"Give me the papers," he said, in a sullen voice, and following a sign from the finger of the judge, he advanced to the table, and beheld the documents, the first of which he read.

It was an important document, containing a brief statement of all Israel's financial affairs,—evidently prepared by one who knew all about him,—together with his solemn promise to redeem every one of his notes, dollar for dollar.

"Could Fetch have betrayed me?"—Israel hissed the words between his set teeth, as he took up the pen.—"If I thought so, I'd cut his throat."

He signed, shook his gold spectacles, and uttered a deep sigh.

"Now, the other paper," said the judge, "its contents are concealed by another sheet, but there is room for your signature."

Israel's little eyes shone wickedly as he gazed upon the sheet of paper, which hid the mysterious document. He chewed the handle of his pen between his teeth,—stood for a moment in great perplexity, and then signed at the bottom of the sheet, the musical name of "ISRAEL YORKE," and then fell back in the chair wiping the sweat from his forehead with the sleeve of his Turkish jacket.

"Anything more?" he gasped.

"You are free," said the judge; "you may now change your dress, and leave this house."

Israel bounced from his seat.

"Yet, hold a single moment. One of these gentlemen will accompany you wherever you go; eat, drink, walk, sit, sleep with you, and be introduced by you to all your financial friends, as your moneyed friend from the country, —"

"Why, you must be the devil incarnate," screamed Israel, and he beat his clenched hand against the arm of the chair.

"It will be the business of your attendant to accompany you to your banking house, and see that you commence the redemption of your notes at nine o'clock this morning. He will report all your movements to me. Were you suffered to go alone, you might, in a fit of absence, glide out of public view, and,—Havana is such a pleasant residence for runaway bankers, especially in winter time."

Israel gave utterance to an oath. The judge, without remarking this pardonable ebullition of feeling, quietly addressed his twelve,—

"Which of you gentlemen will put yourself under this gentleman's orders, as his attendant and shadow?"

There was a pause, and one of the twelve advanced and laid his brawny hand upon the table. His gaunt and muscular form was clad in a sleek frock-coat of dark blue cloth, buttoned over his broad chest to his throat, where it was relieved by a black cravat and high shirt collar. His harsh features, closely shaven, and disfigured by a hideous scar on his cheek,—features manifesting traces of hardship and age,—were in singular contrast with his hair, which, sleek, and brown and glossy, was parted neatly in the middle of his huge head, and descended to either ear, in massy curls. His eyes, half hidden by the shaggy brows, shone with an expression only to be described by the words, *ferocious fun*.

"I'll go with him, boss," said a gruff voice; and, turning to Israel, this singular individual regarded him with a steady look. Israel returned his look, and the twain gazed upon each other with increasing interest; and at length the individual approached Israel, and bent down his head near to his face.

"It's the fellow,—it's the fellow!" cried Israel, once more bouncing from his seat. "He robbed me last night in the cars,—he—"

"Be silent," cried the judge, who had regarded this scene attentively, with his hand upraised to his brow.—"Gentlemen, conduct the prisoner into the next room, and leave me alone with this person," he pointed to the gaunt individual who stood alone by the table.

The eleven disappeared through the curtains into the Golden Room with Israel in their charge.

"Now sir, who are you?" sternly inquired the judge.

The individual gravely lifted his brown hair,—for it was a wig,—and disclosed the outline of his huge head, with the black hair streaked with gray, cut close to the scalp. Then turning down the high shirt-collar, he disclosed the lower part of his face,—the wide mouth and iron jaw, stamped with a savage resolution.

"Don't you think I'm hansum?" he said, and the eyes twinkled under the bushy brows, and the mouth distorted in a grin.

"It's the same!" ejaculated the judge,—
"How did you escape from the room in which you were confined some three hours ago, and what do you here?"

"As yer so civil and pleasant spoken, I don't mind answerin' yer questions. Arter the poleese had tied me, and left me in the dark upon the bed, 'it looks black,' said I to myself, 'but don't give it up so easy!' and a side door was opened, an' a hand cut my cords, and a voice said 'get up and travel,—the way is clear,' and a bundle was put into my hand, containin' these clothes, and this head o' hair.—I rigged myself out in the dark, pitched my old clothes under the bed, an' then went down the back stairway. I certainly did travel—"

"And then?"

"And then," responded the individual, "I went and got shaved."

"How came you here?"

"Thinking, I was safer in a crowd, than anywhere else, I put for down town, and I mixed in with the folks in front of Israel Yorke's banking-house, and as they were hollering, why I hollered too. They wanted to pitch into him,—so did I. Lord! didn't they holler! And a gen'elman, seein' I was so airnest, told me about a private party, who were about to foller up Isr'el, to this house. One o' their gang, he said, was sick,—he axed me to jine 'em,—and swore me in as one of your perleese,—and I jined 'em."

"What is your name?" cried the judge, sternly.

"In the place where I was last, they called me Ninety-One," answered the old convict, arranging the high collar about his face,—
"Years ago, when I was an honest man, afore a man in a cloak, on a dark night,

left a baby with me and my wife, I was called, ————"

He paused, and passed his brawny hand over his eyes. The judge started up from his seat.—

"Yes, yes, you were called,—" he exclaimed.

"John Hoffman," replied the convict.

The judge sank back in his chair, and his head dropped upon his breast. It was sometime before he spoke,—

"I have heard of your story before," he said, in a tremulous voice. "And now answer me one question," he continued in a firmer voice.—"Did you commit the murder for which you were arrested?"

"I can't expect you to believe an old cuss like me, but I certainly did *not*," responded Ninety-One.

"How came you in the room next to the one in which the murdered man was found?"

"I was took there by a *friend*, who offered to hide me from the folks who were arter me, about Israel's valise."

The judge seemed buried in thought.

"And after the murder was discovered, and you were arrested and pinioned, the same *friend* appeared once more, and aided your escape?"

"It was a friend," dryly responded Ninety-One,—
"can't say what he looked like, as the room was as black as your hat, (purviden you don't wear a white hat)".

"Did you commit the robbery on the railroad cars, last night?"

"I'll be straight up and down with you, hoss," said Ninety-One,—
"I did *not*,—and nobody didn't. The money was found on the track, after the smashin' up o' the cars."

"Do you imagine the *friend*, who hid you away in the house of old Mr. Somers, intended to implicate you in the murder of his son?"

"That's jist one o' th' p'int's I'd like to settle;" Ninety-One uttered a low deep laugh, "if he did, I wouldn't give three tosses of a bad copper for his windpipe."

"As the case stands now, you labor under the double suspicion of robbery and murder. Now mark me,—if you are innocent, I will defend you. In the course of the day, I will have some future talk with you. For the present, your disguise will avoid suspicion

for a day or two. You will go with Israel Yorke, and report all his movements to me. My name and residence you will find on the card near the candlestick. One question more—there was a boy with you,—”

The voice of the judge again grew tremulous.

Ninety-One, attired in the neat frock-coat, which displayed the brawny width of his chest, drew himself to his full height, and gazed upon the judge, long and earnestly, his eyes deep-sunken behind his bushy brows.

“Do you think I’d answered all your questions, boss, if I hadn’t thought you knew somethin’ o’ my life and had the will and the power to set me right afore the world? Well it’s not for my own sake, I wish to be set right, but for the sake of that boy. And afore I answer your question, let me ax another: Did you ever happen to know a man named Doctor Martin Fulmer?”

Ninety-One could not see the expression of the judge’s face, (for as you are aware, that face was concealed under the shadow of the broad brimmed hat,) but when the judge replied to his question, his voice was marked by perceptible agitation:

“I know Dr. Fulmer. In fact,—in fact,—I am often intrusted by him with business. He will be in town to-morrow.”

“He is alive then,” exclaimed Ninety-One.

“Well boss, when you meet Dr. Martin Fulmer, jist tell him that that boy, who was with me, had a parchment about his neck, on which these letters was writ, ‘G. G. V. H. C.’ The very same,” he continued, as if thinking aloud, “which I used to send in a letter, to Dr. Martin Fulmer.”

“And this boy,” almost shrieked the judge, rising, and starting one step forward, on the platform, his corpse-like hand extended toward Ninety-One,—“This boy with the parchment about his neck, where,—where is he now?”

CHAPTER VII.

“WHERE IS THE CHILD OF GULIAN VAN HUYDEN?”

“In the early part of the evenin’ I left him in this very house, in company with a gal named Frank,—”

The judge interrupted him,—“Bring in the prisoner!” he shouted, and the eleven

shuffled into the room, escorting the little gentleman in Turkish jacket and trowsers: “Draw near sir,” he beckoned to Ninety-One, “attend this man from this house,—” he pointed to Yorke, “and do with him as I direct you,—thus,—” he communicated his directions to Ninety-One, in a rapid tone, broken by emotion, and inaudible to the eleven; “and you gentlemen,—” to the eleven,—“already have your instructions.”

He paused and then clutched Ninety-One by the hand, the convict endeavoring, although vainly, to gain a glimpse of his features,—“In this house with Frank did you say?” his voice was husky.

“In this house, with a gal named Frank,” answered Ninety-One.

The judge stepped hastily from the platform, and his steps trembling as he went, disappeared through a side door, his hands clasped over his breast.

Israel Yorke found himself alone with Ninety-One and the eleven gentlemen with clubs. Ninety-One addressed him in a tone of cheerful politeness:

“Come, old cock, you and me’s got to travel,” he said, covering Israel’s right shoulder with his huge hand.

Israel, biting his lips with illy suppressed rage, could not help venting the bitterness of his soul, in a single word,—

“Devil,” he hissed the word between his set teeth.

“Well, I *am* a devil Isr’el,” answered Ninety-One good humoredly, “an’ your another. But you see there’s two kind o’ devils. I’ll explain it to you. Once a little sneak of a devil came up to the head devil, (this happened in the lower regions,) and offered to take his arm, ‘you’re one devil, and I’m another, and so we’re ekle,’ says the little sneak of a devil. Now the head devil did not like this. He says, says he, to the little sneak, ‘There’s two kind o’ devils, young gen’leman. There’s me, for instance,—when I fell from Heaven, I showed *pluck* anyhow, and fell like a devil, and went about makin’ *stump speeches* in the lower regions. But you,—you,—what was you doing meanwhile? Sneakin’ out o’ Heaven with your carpet-bag full of gold bricks, which you had stolen from the gold pavement.’ Now Isr’el the name of the first devil was Beelzebub, and

the little sneak of a devil was called, Mammon. Do you take?"

The eleven gentlemen with clubs, received this elegant apologue, with evident pleasure, manifesting their delight by a unanimous burst of laughter.

Israel said nothing, but evidently was absorbed in a multitude of reflections, not altogether of the most pleasant character.

In a short time, once more arrayed in his every-day attire he left the Temple, accompanied by Ninety-One, and followed by the eleven.

Hastening from the "Court of Ten Millions," his hands clasped tightly over his breast, and his steps trembling as he went, THE JUDGE was determined, at all hazards, to obtain an immediate interview with Frank. Hurrying along a dark passage, and then down the dark stairway,—for the lights had been extinguished, and the Temple was dark and silent as the tomb,—the judge muttered frequently the words "in this house,—in this house!" and then exclaimed,—“O, he cannot, cannot escape me! The hand of fate has led him hither.”

He opened a door, and entered the magnificent apartment, in which, in the early part of the evening, Tarleton feasted with his friends, while at the head of the table, sat the corse of Evelyn Somers. Now all was dark and silent there.

The judge lost no time, but retraced his steps and hurried up-stairs. He presently entered the Central Chamber, where a few candles burned to their sockets, shed their pale and uncertain light, over the pictures and the mirrors, the tables covered with flowers, and the lofty ceiling supported by marble pillars. When last we saw the Central Chamber, it was all life and motion; warm pulses were throbbing, bright eyes flashing there. Then gay and varied costumes glittered in the light, and each voluptuous recess, echoed to the sighs of passion. Now the scene presented that saddest of all spectacles,—the decaying lights of a festival, emitting their last dim gleam, upon the faded splendors of the forsaken festal hall. Popes, Caliphs, Cardinals, Quakeresses, Knights, Nymphs and Houris, all were gone. The place was silent as the grave, and much more sad.

A single form walked slowly up and down the silent hall,—a woman, whose noble person was attired in black velvet, her dark hair falling to her shoulders, and a white cross clustering on her brow. Her hands dropped listlessly by her side, and her dark eyes dilating in their sockets, were fixed in a vacant stare.

“Frank, I must speak with you at once, and on a subject of life and death,” cried the judge, suddenly confronting her. Even as he spoke, he was startled at the unnatural pallor of her face. “To-night a young man, in whose history I am fearfully interested, entered this house, and saw you in your chamber. He is now here,” he continued impetuously,—“I must see him.”

“You mean the lost son of Gulian Van Huyden?” she calmly said, pausing in her walk, and folding her arms over her breast.

“He was here then,” cried the judge, evidently wild with agitation, “nay he is here now.”

“He was here half an hour ago,” returned Frank, who, pre-occupied with her own thoughts, did not seem to notice the agitation of the Judge,—“half an hour ago he left the house.”

“Left the house? Whither has he gone?”

“I know not.”

“Child, child, you mock me,” in his agitation he seized her wrist,—“I must see this boy, it is upon a matter of life and death. For God’s sake do not trifle with me.”

“I tell you, that he left the house half an hour ago,” returned Frank, “and as I hope to have peace in the hour of my death, I do not know whither he has gone.”

The solemnity of her tone impressed the judge.

“But will he return?”

“He will never return,—never!” she answered, and it seemed to the judge, as though there was a hidden meaning in her words.

“O, do not drive me to despair. I must see this youth, before to-morrow,—yes, to-day,—this hour!”

“You will never see him in this house again.”

“Did he leave this house alone, or was he accompanied,—and by whom?”

A strange smile passed over her face as she replied in a whisper—

“He was accompanied by Mary Berman,

who arisen from the grave, came here to claim her husband."

The Judge uttered a wild ejaculation, and sank half fainting in a chair,—his hat fell from his brow, and his face was revealed.

That face, remarkable in every outline, was bathed in cold moisture, and distorted by contending emotions.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEVERLY AND JOANNA.

In the Temple, near the hour of dawn, on the morning of the 24th of December, 1844.

"Fallen!"

Yes, fallen! nevermore to press the kiss of a pure mother upon the lips of her innocent child. Fallen! never more to meet her husband's gaze, with the look of a chaste and faithful wife. Fallen!—from wifely purity, from all that makes the past holy, or the future hopeful—fallen, from all that makes life worth the having,—fallen! and forever!

"Fallen!"

Oh, how this word, trembling from her lips—wrung from her heart—echoed through the stillness of the dimly-lighted chamber.

She was seated on the sofa, her noble form clad in the white silken robe—her hands clasped—her golden hair unbound—her neck and shoulders bare: and the same light hanging from the ceiling, which disclosed the details of that luxurious chamber—carpet, chairs, sofa, mirror, and the snow-white couch in a distant recess—fell upon her beautiful countenance, and revealed the remorse that was written there. There was a wild, startled look in her blue eyes; her lips were apart; her cheek was now, pale as death, and then, flushed with the scarlet hues of unavailing shame.

He was reclining at her feet; his arm resting on the sofa; his face upturned—his eyes gazing into hers. Clad in the costume of the white monk—a loose robe of white cloth, with wide sleeves, edged with red—Beverly Barron toyed with his flaxen curls, as he looked into her face, and remarked her with a look of mingled meaning. There was base appetite, gratified vanity, but no remorse in his look.

And the light fell on his florid face, with

its sensual mouth, receding chin, wide nostrils, and bullet-shaped forehead, encircled by ringlets of flaxen hair—a face altogether *animal*, with scarcely a single ray of a higher nature, to light up or refine its grossness.

"Fallen!" cried Joanna; and clasped her hands, and shuddered, as if with cold.

"Never mind, dear," said Beverly, and he bent forward and kissed her hands—"I will love you always!"

"Oh, my God!"—and in that ejaculation, all the agony of her soul found utterance,—
"Oh, my God! my child!"

Beverly knelt at her feet, and kissed her clenched hands, and endeavored to soothe her with professions of undying love; but she tore her hands from his grasp—

"My husband! How can I ever look into his face again!"

Had you seen that noble form, swelling in every fiber; had you seen the silken robe, heaved upward by the agony which filled her bosom; had you seen the look, so wild—remorseful—almost mad—which stamped her face,—you would have felt the emphasis with which she uttered these terrible words, "My husband! How can I ever look into his face again!"

"Your husband," whispered Beverly, with something of the devil in his eyes, "your husband, even now, is on his way to Boston, where the chosen mistress of his heart awaits him. His brother is at the point of death, is he? ha, ha, Joanna! 'Twas a good excuse, but, like all excuses, rather lame—when found out. The poor, good, dear Joanna, sits at home, pining at her husband's absence, while he, the faithful Eugene, consoles himself in the arms of his Boston love!"

"It cannot be! it cannot be!" cried Joanna, beating the carpet with her foot, and pressing her clenched hands against her heaving breast.

"Do you see this, darling?" and, throwing the robe of the white monk aside, he disclosed his "flashy" scarf, white vest and gold chain. "Do you see this, pet?" and from beneath his white vest he drew forth a package of letters.—"*Her* letters to her dear Eugene! How she loves him—how she pities him, because he is not married to a sympathetic soul,—how she counts the hours

that must elapse before he comes! It is all written here, darling!"

Joanna took the package and passed it absently from one hand to the other. "Yes, yes, I read them yesterday! It is true, beyond hope of doubt. He loves her!—he loves her!"

"And you,"—Beverly arose and seated himself by her side, winding his arm about her waist. "And you, like a brave, noble woman, whose dearest affections have been trampled upon,"—he wound his left hand amid the rich masses of her golden hair,— "you, like a brave, proud heart, whose very May of life has been blighted by a husband's treachery,—have *avenged* yourself upon him!"

He pressed his kiss upon her lips. But the warmth of passion had passed away. Her lips were cold. She shrunk from his embrace. The vail had fallen from her eyes; the delusion, composed of a mad passion and a mad desire for revenge, had left her, and she knew herself to be no longer the stainless wife and holy mother—but that thing for which on earth there is no forgiveness—an adulteress!

"No, Beverly, no. It will not avail. His fault was no excuse for my crime. For his fault affects me only—wrongs me alone—but mine,—," there was a choking sensation in her throat—she buried her face in her hands—"Oh God! oh God! my child!"

Beverly took a bottle of champagne which stood upon the table, drew the cork, and filled two brimming glasses.

"You are nervous, my darling," he said, "take this. Let us pledge each other—for the past, forgetfulness—for the future, hope and love."

He stood erect beneath the lamp—his tall form, clad in the robe of the white monk, relieved by the very gloom of the luxurious chamber; he pressed the glass to his lips, and over its rim surveyed the white couch, which looked dim and shadowy in its distant recess,—he murmured, "Eugene, your magnificent wife is mine!"

And then drained the glass without moving it from his lips.

She took the glass and drank; but the same wine which an hour ago had fired her blood, and completed the delusion of her

senses, now only added to her remorse and shame.

"My father,—so proud of his name, so proud of the honor of his son, the purity of his daughter, how shall I ever meet his eye? how can I ever look him in the face again?"

And the image of that stern old man, with wrinkled visage and snow-white hair, rose vividly before her. Her father was an aristocrat of the old school—proud, not of his money, but of his blood. The royal blood of Orange flowed in his veins. Loving his only daughter better than his own soul, he would have put her to death with his own hand, sooner than she should incur even the suspicion of dishonor.

"Pshaw, Joanna! He need never know anything about the adventures of this night. You have been slighted, and you have taken your revenge;—that is all. No one need know anything about it. You will mingle in society as usual; these things, my darling, are almost things of course in the fashionable world, among the 'upper ten.'" Among the beautiful dames whom you see at the opera, on a 'grand night,' how many do you suppose would waste one thought of regret upon an adventure like this?"

Joanna buried her burning temples in her hands. All of her life rushed before her. Her childhood—the days of her pure maidenhood—the hour of her marriage, when she gave herself to the husband who idolized her,—the hour of her travail, when she gave birth to her child,—all rushed upon her, with the voices, tones, faces of other days, commingled in one brief but vivid panorama.

"You see, my pet, you know but little of the world," continued Beverly. "In the very dawn of your beauty, ignorant of the world, and of the value of your own loveliness, you wedded Eugene. Life was a rose-colored dream to you; you thought of him only as the ideal of your existence. You thought that he regarded you in the same light. You did not dream that he would ever regard you simply as the handsomest piece of furniture about his splendid establishment,—a splendid fixture, destined to bear him children who would perpetuate the name of Livingston,—while his roving affec-

tions wandered about the world, constantly seeking new objects of passionate regard. You never dreamt of this, did you, darling?"

Joanna uttered a groan. Pressing her hands to her throbbing temples, she felt her bosom swell, but could not frame a word.

"Now, my dear, you are a woman; you know something of the world. Like hundreds of others of your wealth and station, you can, under the veil of decorum, select the object of a passionate attachment, and indulge your will at pleasure. A bright future, rich in love and in all that makes life dear, is before you——"

And Beverly drew her to him, putting one arm about her neck, while his left hand girdled her bosom. As he kissed her, her golden hair floated over his face and shoulders.

At this moment the door opened without a sound, and a man wrapped in a cloak, with a cap over his brow, advanced with a noiseless step toward the sofa.

It was not until his shadow interposed between them and the light, that they beheld him. As Joanna raised her head, struggling to free herself from the embrace of her seducer, she beheld the intruder, who had lifted his cap from his brow.

"O God, Eugene!" she shrieked, and fell back upon the sofa, not fainting, but utterly paralyzed, her limbs as cold as marble, her blood turned to ice in her veins.

It was Eugene Livingston. Gently folding his arms, cap in hand, he surveyed his wife. His face was turned from the light,—its ghastly paleness could not be seen. His cloak hid the heavings of his breast. But the light which fired his eyes, met the eyes of his wife, and burned into her soul.

He did not speak to her.

Turning from her, he surveyed Beverly Barron, who had started to his feet, and who now stood as if suddenly frozen, with something of the look and attitude of a man who is condemned to watch a lighted candle, as it burns away in the center of a barrel of gunpowder.

Not a word was spoken.

Joanna crouching on the sofa, her chin resting on her clasped hands,—Beverly on the floor, his hands outspread, and his face dumb with terror,—Eugene standing between them, folding his cloak upon his breast, as

he silently turned his gaze, first to his wife, and then to her seducer.

At length Eugene spoke,—

"Come, Joanna," he said, "here is your father. He will take you home."

She looked up and beheld the straight, military form, the stern visage and snow-white hair of her father. One look only, and she sank lifeless at his feet. She may have meant to have knelt before him, but as she rose from the sofa, or rather, glided from it, she fell like a corpse at his feet. The old general's nether lip worked convulsively, but he did not speak.

"General, take her to my home, and at once," whispered Eugene. "There must be no scandal, no noise, and ——" he paused as if suffocating,—"*no harshness, mark you.*"

The general was a stalwart man, although his hair was white as snow,—a man whose well-knit limbs, erect bearing, and sinewy hands, indicated physical vigor undimmed by age, but he trembled like a withered leaf as he raised his daughter from the floor.

"I will do as you direct, Eugene," he said, in a husky voice.

"You will find her cloak in the next room," said Eugene, "and the carriage is at the door."

The general girded his insensible daughter in his arms, and bore her from the room. As he crossed the threshold, he groaned like a dying man.

Eugene and Beverly were alone. Beverly at a rapid glance surveyed the room. Eugene stood between him and the door; he turned to the windows, which were covered with thick curtains. Those windows were three stories high. There was no hope of escape by the windows.

"Will you take a chair, my friend," said Eugene.

Beverly sank into a chair, near the table; as he seated himself, he felt his knees bend beneath him, and his heart leap to his throat.

Eugene took a chair opposite, and shading his eyes with his hand, surveyed the seducer. There was silence for a few moments, a silence during which both these men endured the agonies of the damned.

"You have a daughter, I believe," said Eugene, in a voice that was broken by a tremor. "You may wish to send some word

to her. Here is a pencil and tablets. Let me ask you to be brief."

He flung the pencil and tablets upon the table. Beverly recoiled as though a serpent had stung him.

"Eugene," he faltered, for the first time finding words, "you—you do not mean to murder me?"

And his florid face grew ashy with abject terror.

Eugene did not reply, but knocked twice upon the marble table with his clenched hand. Scarcely had the echo of the sound died away, when the door was once more opened, and two persons advanced to the table.

The first was a tall, muscular man, with a phlegmatic face, light hair, and huge red whiskers. His blue frock-coat was buttoned to the throat, and he carried an oblong box in his hands.

"Joanna's brother!" ejaculated Beverly.

The second person was a dapper little gentleman, with small eyes, a hooked nose, and an enormous black moustache. He was dressed in black, with a gold chain on his breast, and a diamond pin in his faultless shirt bosom.

"Major Barton!" ejaculated Beverly, bounding from his seat, for in Major Barton he recognized an old and intimate acquaintance.

"Robert," said Eugene, turning to Joanna's brother, "what have you there?"

"The dueling pistols," quietly responded Robert.

"Have you and this gentleman's friend arranged the *preliminaries*?"

"We have," interrupted the dapper Major; "distance, ten paces,—place, Weehawk, opposite the city,—time, right off."

"This without consulting me!" cried Beverly, who at the mention of a duel, felt a hope lighten up in his heart, for coward as he was, he was also a capital shot.

"Gentlemen, I beg to say,—" he drew his White Monk's robe over his heart, and assumed a grand air,—"gentlemen,—"

The dapper little major glided to his side,—

"Bev., my boy, better be quiet. Eugene waited on me an hour ago and explained all the circumstances,—desired me to act as

your friend. As I'd rather see you have a chance for your life in a duel, than to see you killed in such a house as this, like a dog, I consented. Bev., my boy, better be quiet."

"If you don't wish to fight, say so," and the phlegmatic Robert stepped forward, eyeing Beverly with a look of settled ferocity, that was not altogether pleasant to see,—“if you decline the duel, just say so in the presence of your friend, Major Barton. Just say no."

And Robert eyed Beverly from head to foot, as though it would afford him much pleasure to pitch him from the third story window.

"I will fight," said Beverly, pale and red by turns.

"Then I'll get your hat, and coat, and cloak," said the obliging major,—“they're in the next room. We must leave the house quietly, and there's a boat waiting for us, at the foot of the street, or the North River. We can cross to the Jersey shore, before morning breaks. It will be a nice little affair all among ourselves. By-the-bye, how about a surgeon?"

"Yes, a surgeon!" echoed Robert, turning to Eugene, who, seated by the table, rested his forehead against his hand.

"We will not need a surgeon," said Eugene, raising his face, from which all color of life had fled. "Because our fight is to the death."

CHAPTER IX.

MARY BERMAN—CARL RAPHAEL.

THEY sat near the marriage altar, their hands clasped, and their gaze fixed upon each other's face. The countenance of Nameless was radiant with a deep joy. One hand resting upon the neck of Mary, the other clasping her hand, his soul was in his eyes, as he looked into her face. Her hair, brown and wavy, streathed over the hand, which rested on her neck. Despite her faded attire,—the gown of coarse calico, and the mantilla of black velvet,—Mary was very beautiful; as beautiful as her name. All the life which swelled her young bosom, was manifested in the bloom of her cheeks, the clear, joyous look of her eyes. Her beauty was the purity of a stainless soul,

embodied in a person, rich with every tint and outline of warm, womanly loveliness.

"Well might my whole being thrill, as you passed by me to-night! Your form was veiled, your face hid, but my soul knew that you were near!"

"O, Carl, in all our lives, we will never know a moment of joy so deep as this!"—and there was something of a holy sadness in Mary's gaze as she spoke,—“After years of sorrow and trial, that might break the stoutest hearts, we have met again, like two persons who have risen from the grave. The world is so dark, Carl,—so crowded with the callous and the base,—that I fear for our future. O, would it not be beautiful, yes holy, to die now, in each other's arms, at the moment when our hearts are filled with the deepest joy they can ever know?"

The words of the pure girl, uttered in a voice imbued with a melancholy enthusiasm, cast a shadow over the face of Nameless, and brought a sad intense light to his eyes.

"Yes, Mary, it is even so," he replied,—“it is a harsh and bitter world, in which the base and callous-hearted, prey upon those who have souls. When I think of my own history, and of yours, it does not seem reality, to me, but the images of the past move before me, like the half defined shapes of a troubled dream."

And he bent his forehead,—fevered and throbbing with thought, upon her bosom, and listened to the beatings of that heart, which had been true to him, in every phase of his dark life. She pressed her lips silently upon his brow.

"But the future is bright before us, Mary," he whispered, raising his face; once more radiant with hope,—“the cottage by the river shore, shall be ours again! O, don't you remember it, Mary, as it leans against the cliff, with the river stretching before it, and the palisades rising far away, into the western sky? We will live there, Mary, and forget the world." Alas! he knew not of the poison in his veins. "Your father, too,—"

"My father!" she echoed, starting from her chair, as the memory of that broken man with the idiot face,—never for a moment forgotten,—came vividly before her, "My father! come Carl, let us go to him!"

She wound the mantilla about her form, and Carl, otherwise Nameless, also rose from his chair, when a footstep was heard, and the door was abruptly opened.

"Leave this house, at once, as you value your life," cried an agitated voice,—“You know my father,—know that he will shrink from no crime, when his darker nature is aroused,—you have foiled the purpose which was more than life to him. There is danger for you in this house! away!"

"Frank!" was all that Nameless could ejaculate, as he saw her stand before him, lividly pale, her hair unbound, and the golden cross rising and falling upon her heaving bosom. There was a light in her eyes, which he had never seen before.

"No words," she continued in broken and rapid tones,—“you must away at once. You are not safe from poison,"—a bitter, mocking smile,—“or steel, or any treachery, as long as you linger in this house. But this is no time for masquerade attire,—in the next room you will find the apparel which you wore, when first you entered this house, together with a cloak, which will protect you from the cold. You have no time to lose,—give me that bauble," and she tore the chain from his neck and the golden cross from his breast,—“away,—you have not a moment to lose." She pointed to the door.

"Frank!" again ejaculated Nameless, and something like remorse smote his heart, as he gazed upon her countenance, so sadly changed.

"Will you drive me mad? Go!" again she pointed to the door.

Nameless disappeared.

"And you,—" she took the hands of Mary within her own, and raised them to her breast, and gazed long and earnestly into that virgin face,—“You, O, I hate you!" she said her eyes flashing fire, and yet the next moment, she kissed Mary on the cheeks and forehead, and pressed her to her bosom with a frenzied embrace. "You are worthy of him," she said slowly, in a low voice, again perusing every line of that countenance,—“I know you, although an hour ago, I did not know that you lived," once more her tones were rapid and broken,—“know your history, know who it was that lured you to this place, and know the desolate condition

of your father. Your husband has money, but it will not be safe for him to attempt to use it for some days. Take this,—conceal it in your bosom,—nay, I will take no denial. Take it child! That money and purse are not the wages of pollution,—they were both mine, in the days when I was pure and happy."

Scarcely knowing what to do, Mary, whom the wild manner of Frank, struck at once with pity and awe, took the purse, and hid it in her bosom.

"I now remember you," said Mary, her eyes filling with tears, as she gazed into the troubled face of Frank,—“Father painted your picture, and afterward you sought us out in our garret, and left your purse upon the table, with a note stating that it contained the balance due on your portrait. O, it was kind, it was noble,—”

“Do not speak of it, child,” Frank said in rapid and abrupt tones,—“Had I not been convinced that you and your father were dead, I would have visited you often. That is, if I could have concealed from you what I was, and the way of life which was mine.”

Her lip quivered, and she hid her eyes with her hand.

“But come, your husband is here,” she said, as Nameless re-appeared, his form once more clad in the faded frock-coat, but with a cloak drooping from his shoulders. “You must away, and at once.”

“Frank,”—and Nameless, trembling with agitation, approached her, “we will meet again in happier hours.”

O, the strange look of her eyes, the bitter mocking curl of her lip!

“We will never meet again,” she answered, in a voice that sunk into his heart. Then burying the chain and golden cross in her bosom, she placed a letter in his hand,—

“Swear to me that you will not read this, until three hours at least are passed?”

“I promise,—”

“Nay, you must swear it,—”

“I swear, in the sight of Heaven!”

“Now depart, and,—” she turned her face away from their gaze, and pointed to the door.

As she turned away, Mary approached her, and put her arms about her neck, and her eyes brim full of tears all the while,—kissed her on the forehead and the lips, saying at the same time, and from the depths of her heart, “May God in Heaven bless you!”

Frank took Mary’s arms from her neck, and joined her hand in that of Nameless, and then pushed them gently to the door,—“Go, and at once,” she whispered.

And they crossed the threshold, Mary looking back over her shoulder, until she disappeared with Nameless, in the shadows of the passage.

Frank stood with one hand extended to the door, and the other supporting her averted face,—she heard their footsteps in the passage, on the stairway, and in the hall beneath. Then came the sound of the opening and closing of the door, which led into the street.

And then the agony, the despair, the thousand emotions which racked her soul, found utterance in the simple, and yet awfully touching ejaculation,—“O, my God!”—and she flung herself on her knees, before the Marriage Altar, resting her clenched hands upon the Holy Bible, which was concealed by her bowed head, and unbound hair.

“O, my God! He is gone, and—forever!”

Yes, Frank, woman so beautiful and so utterly lost, gone and forever—gone, with his young wife by his side, and Poison in his veins

NEW YORK :

ITS

UPPER-TEN AND LOWER MILLION.

PART FIFTH.

THE DAWN, SUNRISE AND DAY.

DECEMBER 24, 1844.

CHAPTER I.

"THE OTHER CHILD."

BAFFLED schemer!

In the dim hour which comes before the break of day, Colonel Tarleton was hurrying rapidly along the silent and deserted street.

Broadway, a few hours since, all light, and life, and motion, was now lonely as a desert. Gathering his cloak over his white coat, and drawing his cap lower upon his brows, Tarleton hurried along with a rapid and impetuous step, now and then suffering the thoughts which filled him, to find vent in broken ejaculations.

"Baffled schemer!" he exclaimed aloud, and then his thoughts arranged themselves into words:—"Why do those words ring in my ears? They do not apply to me; let me but live twenty-four hours, and all the schemes which I have worked and woven for twenty-one long years, will find their end in a grand, a final triumph. Baffled schemer! No,—not yet, nor never! This boy who was to marry Frank, will *fade away* in a few hours, and make no sign; and now for the other child. I must hasten to the house of old Somers,—his 'private secretary' must be mine before daybreak. The hour is unusual, the son lies dead in one room,—the father in the other; but I must enter the house at all hazards, for,—for,—the *only remaining child* of Gulian Van Huyden, must be in my power before daybreak."

And he hurried along toward the head of Broadway, through the silent city. Even in the gloom, the agitation which possessed him, was plainly discernible. The hand which held the cloak upon his breast was tightly clenched, and, as he passed through

the light of a lamp, you might note his compressed lip, his colorless cheek, and eyes burning with intense thought. His whole life swept before him like a panorama. The day when the wife and mother lay dead in her palace home, while Gulian, his brother, clutched him with a death-grip as he plunged into the river,—the years which he had gayly passed in Paris, and the horrible years which he had endured in the felon's cell,—the happy childhood, and the irrevocable shame of his daughter, sold by her own mother into the arms of lust and gold,—his duel with young Somers, whom he had first murdered, and then smuggled his corpse into his father's home,—the scenes which he had this night witnessed in the Temple, beginning with his interview with Ninety-One, and ending in the marriage of Frank and Nameless, and the apparition of Mary Ber-
man,—all flitted before him like the phantoms of a spectral panorama.

"And the next twenty-four hours will decide all! Courage, brain, you have never yet despaired,—" he struck his clenched hand against his forehead,—"*do not fail me now!*"

Turning from Broadway, as the night grew darker, he entered the street in which the house of Evelyn Somers, Sr., was situated. He was rapidly approaching that house,—cogitating what manner of excuse he should make to the servants for his call at such an unusual hour,—when he was startled by the sound of footsteps. He paused, where a street lamp flung its light over the pavement. Shading his eyes, he beheld two figures approaching through the gloom. He glided from the light, and stationed himself against the wall, so that he could see the figures as they passed, himself unseen. The steps

drew near and nearer, and presently from the gloom the figures passed into the light. A man, wrapped in a cloak, with a broad *sombrero* drooping over his face, supported on his arm the form of a youth, who, clad in a closely buttoned frock-coat, trembled from weakness, or from the winter's cold. The face of the man was in shadow, but the light shone fully on the face of the youth as he passed by.

Tarleton, with great difficulty, suppressed an ejaculation and an oath.

For in that boy who leaned tremblingly upon the arm of the cloaked man, he recognized the *Private Secretary* of the merchant prince!

"Courage, my poor boy,"—Tarleton heard the cloaked man utter these words, as he passed by,—“it was a happy impulse which led me to leave my carriage, and walk along this street. I arrived just in time to save you; it is but a step to my carriage, and once in my carriage you will tell me all.”

“O, sir, you will protect me,”—the voice of the youth was tremulous and broken,—“you will protect me from this man——”

And with these words they passed from the light into the gloom again.

Tarleton stood for a moment, as though nailed to the wall against which he leaned. He could not believe the evidence of his senses. That the boy, Gulian Van Huyden, the private secretary had left the mansion of the merchant prince, at this strange hour, and was now in the care of a man whom he, Tarleton, did not know; this fact was plain enough, but Tarleton could not believe it. He stood as though nailed to the wall, while the footsteps of the retreating figures resounded through the stillness. At length, with a violent effort, he recovered his presence of mind.

“I will follow them and reclaim *my child!*” he ejaculated, and gathering his cloak across the lower part of his face, hurried once more toward Broadway.

But as he discovered the distance between himself and the figures of the cloaked man and the youth, his purpose failed him, he knew not why,—he dared not address the man, much less seize the boy, Gulian,—but he still hung upon their back, watching their every movement, himself unobserved.

Meanwhile, a thousand vague suspicions and fears flitted through his mind.

At the head of Broadway, in the light of a lamp, stood a carriage, with a coachman in dark livery on the box. The horses, black as jet, stood, beating the pavement with their hoofs, and champing their bits impatiently.

The unknown paused beside this carriage, still supporting the boy, Gulian, on his arm.

“Felix,” he said, in a low voice, addressing the coachman, who started up at the sound of his voice, “drive at once, and with all speed, to the house yonder,”—he pointed to the north.

“Yes, my lord,” was the answer of the coachman.

“And you, poor boy,” continued the unknown, thus addressed as “my lord,” turning to young Gulian,—“enter, and be safe here—after from all fear of persecution.” He opened the carriage door, and Gulian entered, followed by the unknown.

And the next moment the sound of the wheels was heard, and the carriage passing Union Square and rolling away toward the north.

Tarleton, who had, unobserved, beheld this scene, started from the shadows and approached the lamp. He clenched his teeth in helpless rage.

“I saw his face for an instant, ere he entered the carriage, and as his cloak fell aside, I noticed the golden cross on his breast; and I neither like his cadaverous face, nor the golden cross. Why,—” he stamped angrily upon the pavement,—“why do I hate and fear this man whom I have never seen before?—‘my lord!’—the cross on his breast,—perchance a dignitary of the Catholic Church! Ah! he will wring the secret from this weak and superstitious boy. All, all is lost!”

He was roused from this fit of despair and rage by the sound of carriage wheels. It was a hackney coach, returning homeward, the horses weary, and the driver lolling sleepily on the box.

Tarleton darted forward and stopped the horses.

“Do you want to earn five dollars for an hour's ride?” he said, “if so, strike up Broadway, and follow a dark carriage drawn by two black horses,” and he mounted the box, and took his seat beside the coachman.

The latter gentleman waking up from his half slumber, and very wroth at the manner in which his horses had been stopped, and his box invaded, forthwith consigned Tarleton to a place which it is not needful to name, adding significantly,—

"An' if yer don't git down, I'll mash yer head,—if I don't,—" etc., etc.

"Pshaw! don't you know me?" cried Tarleton, lifting his cap,—“follow the carriage yonder, and I'll make it ten dollars for half an hour's ride.”

"Why, it is the colonel!" responded the mollified hackman.—“My team is blowed, colonel, but you're a brick, and here goes! Up Broadway did you say?—let her rip!”

He applied the whip to his wearied horses, and away they dashed, passing Union Square, and entering upper Broadway.

"That the carriage, colonel?" asked the driver, as they heard the sound of wheels in front of them, "that concern as looks blacker than a stack of black cats?"

"It is. Follow it. Do not let the coachman know that we are in pursuit. Follow it carefully, and at a proper distance."

And the hackney coach followed the carriage of the unknown, until they passed from the shadows of the houses into the open country. Some four miles at least from the city hall, the carriage turned from one of the avenues, into a narrow lane, leading among the rocks, over a hill and down toward the North River.

The colonel jumped from the box.

"Wait for me here,—I'll not be long. Drive a little piece up the avenue, so that you will not be noticed, in case this carriage should return. Wait for me, I say,—for every hour I will give you ten dollars."

With these words he hurried up the hill, in pursuit of the retreating carriage. The ground was frosted and broken,—huge rocks blocked up the path on either hand, and on the hill-top stood a clump of leafless trees. Pausing beneath these trees, the colonel endeavored to discern the carriage through the darkness, but in vain. But he heard the sound of the wheels as they rolled over the hard ground in the valley below.

"It cannot go far. This lane terminates at the river, only two or three hundred yards away. Ah! I remember,—half-way between

the hill and the river there is an old mansion which I noticed last summer, and which has not been occupied for years."

The sound of the wheels suddenly ceased. The colonel drew the cord of his cloak about his neck, so as to permit his arms full play. Then from one pocket of his overcoat he drew forth a revolver, and from the other a bowie-knife. Grasping a weapon firmly in each hand, he stealthily descended the hill, and on tip-toe approached the carriage, which had indeed halted in front of the old mansion.

The mansion, a strange and incongruous structure, built of stone, and brick, and wood, and enlarged from the original block house, which it had been two hundred years before, by the additions made by five or six generations, stood in a garden, apart from the road, its roofs swept by the leafless branches of gigantic forest-trees. In summer, quaint and incongruous as were the outlines of the huge edifice, it put on a beautiful look, for it was embowered in foliage, and its many roofs and walls of brick, and wood and stone, were hidden in a garment of vines and flowers. But now, in the blackness of this drear winter daybreak, it was black and desolate enough. Not a single light shed a cheerful ray, from any of the windows.

Gliding behind the trunk of a sycamore, the colonel heard the voice of the unknown man, as he conducted the boy, Gulian, from the carriage along the garden walk toward the hall door.

"Here you will be safe from all intrusion. I must return to the city at once, but I will be back early in the morning. Meanwhile, you can take a quiet sleep. You are not afraid to sleep in the old house, are you?"

"Oh, no, no,—afraid of nothing but *his* persecution," was the answer.

The colonel heard these words, and watched the figures of the unknown and Gulian, as they passed from the garden walk under the shadow of the porch, and into the hall door.

And then he waited,—O how earnestly and with what a tide of hopes, suspicions, fears!—for the re-appearance of the unknown!

Five minutes passed.

"The boy has not had time to confess *the secret*,"—the thought almost rose to the colonel's lips.—“If this unknown man returns

to town, leaving Gulian here, all will yet be well."

The hall-door opened again, was locked, and the form of the unknown, in cloak and sombrero, once more appeared upon the garden walk.

"To town, Felix, as fast as you can drive. I must be back within two hours."

"Yes, my lord."

He entered the carriage,—it turned,—and the horses dashed up the narrow road at full speed.

"Two hours!" ejaculated Tarleton, as the sound of the wheels died away. "In two hours, 'my lord!' you will find the nest robbed of its bird."

Determined at all hazards to rescue the person of the boy, Gulian, and bear him from the old mansion, he opened the wicket gate, and, passing along the garden walk, approached the silent mansion. The wind sighed mournfully among the leafless branches, and not a single ray of light illumined the front of the gloomy pile.

The colonel passed under the porch, and tried the hall door; it was locked. With a half-muttered curse, he again emerged from the porch, and from the garden walk, once more surveyed the mansion.

Could he believe his eyes? From a narrow window, in the second story of the western wing, a ray of light stole out upon the gloom—stole out from an aperture in the window curtains—and trembled like a golden thread along the garden walk.

"The window is low,—the room is a part of the olden portion of the mansion,—that lattice work, intended for the vines, will bear my weight; one blow at the window-sash, and I am in the chamber!"

Thus reflecting, the colonel, ere he began to mount the lattice work, looked cautiously around and listened. All was dark; no sound was heard, save the low moan of the wind among the trees. Tarleton placed the revolver in one pocket, and buried the bowie-knife in its sheath. Then he began cautiously to ascend the lattice work, along which, in summer time, crept a green and flowering vine; it creaked beneath his weight, but did not break,—in a moment he was on a level with the narrow window. Resting his arms upon the deep window-sill, he placed his eye

to the aperture in the curtains, and looked within.

He beheld a small room, with low ceiling, and wainscoted walls; a door, which evidently opened upon the corridor leading to the body of the mansion; a couch, with a canopy of faded tapestry; the floor of dark wood, uncarpeted, and its once polished surface thick with dust; a bureau of ebony, surmounted by an oval mirror in a frame of tarnished gilt. The light stood upon the bureau; and, in front of the light, an alabaster image of the crucified.

Before this image, with head bowed upon his clasped hands, knelt the boy, Gulian. The light shone upon his glossy hair, which fell to his shoulders, and over the outlines of his graceful shape. He was evidently absorbed in voiceless prayer.

Altogether, it was a singular—yes, a beautiful picture. But the Colonel had no time to waste on pictures, however beautiful.

He placed his arm against the sash—it yielded—and the colonel sprang through the window into the room.

Gulian heard the crash, and started up, and beheld the colonel standing near him, his arms folded on his breast, and his face stamped with a look of fiendish triumph.

"Oh, my God!" he ejaculated, and stood as if spell-bound by terror.

"You see it is all in vain," said the Colonel, showing his white teeth in a smile. "You cannot escape from me. You must do my will. Come, my child, we must be moving."

He placed Gulian's cap upon his chesnut curls, and pointed to the door.

The eyes of the poor youth were wild with affright. He evidently stood in mortal terror of Tarleton. His glance roved from side to side, and he ejaculated—

"In his power again; just as I thought myself forever safe from his persecution!"

"Answer me—where did you meet the man who brought you to this house?"

As he spoke, Tarleton seized the boy by the wrist.

"In the street; I had fainted on the sidewalk," was the answer, in a tremulous voice.

"And how came you in the street at such an unusual hour?"

"When you left Mr. Somers' house, you

threatened to return to-morrow," answered Gulian, clasping his hands over his breast. "I was determined to avoid seeing you again, at all hazards. I left the house, and wandered forth, uncertain whither to direct my steps. Yes—oh yes! I had one purpose plainly in my mind,"—he smiled, and his eyes brightened up with a strange light,—“I resolved to bend my steps to the river.”

“To the river?”

“Yes, to the river,” answered the boy, with a singular smile: “for you know that if I was drowned, I would be safe from you forever.”

“And you would become a—suicide!” said Tarleton, with a sneer; “you, so finely brought up! Have you no fear of the hereafter?”

Gulian’s pale face lighted with a faint glow.—“There are some deeds which are worse than suicide,” he answered quietly, yet with a significant glance. “It was to avoid the commission of one of these deeds, that, scarcely an hour ago, I left the house of Mr. Somers and bent my steps to the river.”

“And you fainted, and this man came across you while you were insensible—eh? Who is he? and what was it that led him from his carriage, along the street where he found you?”

“An impulse, or presentiment, as he told me, which he could not resist, and which impressed him that he might save the life of a fellow-being. He left his carriage; he arrived before it was too late. In a little while I should have been frozen to death.”

Again Tarleton seized the boy by the wrist; and his brow grew dark, his eyes fierce and threatening.

“And you confessed *the secret* to this man?” he exclaimed. “Nay, deny it not!” He tightened his grasp. “You did confess—did you not?”

“Oh, pity!—do not harm me!” and Gulian shrunk before Tarleton’s gaze. “I did not confess *the secret*—indeed I did not.”

“Swear you did not!”

“I swear I did not!”

“I will not believe you, unless you will place your hand upon this crucifix, and swear by the Savior, that you did not reveal *the secret*.”

The boy placed his hand upon the alabas-

ter image, and said solemnly, “By the name of the Savior, I swear that I did not reveal *the secret* of which you speak.”

Tarleton burst into a laugh.

“I breathe freer!” he cried. “You are superstitious; and, with your hand upon an image like that, I know you cannot lie. *The secret* is safe, and all will yet be well. Come, we must go.”

“Oh, you do not want me now!” cried Gulian, shrinking away from his grasp—“now that you are assured of the security of *the secret*?”

“Worse than ever, my boy,” cried Tarleton, with a tone of mocking gayety. “I am positively starving to death for your company. To-day and to-morrow you must be with me all the time, and never for an instant quit my sight. After that you are free!”

The countenance of Gulian, in which a masculine vigor of thought was tempered by an almost woman-like roundness of outline and softness of expression, underwent a sudden and peculiar change.

“I will not go with you,” he said, slowly and firmly, his eyes shining vividly, while his face was unnaturally pale.

“You will not go with me?” and Tarleton advanced with a scowling brow—“We’ll see, we’ll see,—”

“I will not go with you,” repeated Gulian. “You call me superstitious. It may be superstition which makes my blood run cold with loathing, when you are near me; or it may be some voiceless warning from the dead, who, while in this life, were deeply injured by you. But it is not superstition, which induces me to place my hand upon this crucifix, and tell you, that you cannot drag me from it, save at peril of your life. Ah, you sneer! The house is deserted:—true. The crucifix of frail alabaster:—true. But you are fairly warned. The moment that crucifix breaks, to you is one of peril.”

Tarleton knew not what to make of the expression and words of the boy. At first there was something in the look of Gulian which touched him, against his will; but, as the closing words fell on his ear, he burst into a laugh. “Come, child, we’ll leave the house by the hall door,” he said; and, as he passed an arm around Gulian’s waist, he placed the other hand upon the door which

led into the passage: "Nay, you need not cling to that bauble! Come! I'll endure this nonsense no longer—"

The alabaster image was crushed in the grasp of Gulian, as he was torn from it; and at the same instant the colonel opened the door.

Gulian, struggling in the grasp of Tarleton, clapped his hands twice, and cried aloud: "Cain! Cain!"

The next moment it seemed as though a crushing weight had bounded, or been hurled, against the colonel's back; he was dashed to the floor; he found himself struggling in the fangs of a huge dog, with short, shaggy hair, black as jet, short ears, and formidable jaws. As the dog uttered a low growl, his teeth sank deep into the back of Tarleton's neck, and Tarleton uttered a groan of intolerable agony. Tarleton was dragged along the floor, by the ferocious beast, which raised him by the neck, and then dashed him to the floor again; treating him as the tiger treats the prey which he is about to strangle and kill.

Cain was indeed a ferocious beast. He had accompanied the unknown over half the globe; and was obedient to his slightest sign; defending those whom he wished defended, and attacking those whom he wished attacked. Before leaving the mansion, the unknown had placed Cain before the door of Gulian's room, and given Gulian into its charge. "Guard him, Cain! obey him, Cain!" And, as Tarleton opened the door, at a sign and a word from Gulian, the dog proved faithful to his master's bidding. In the grasp of this formidable animal, Tarleton now found himself writhing—his blood spurting over the floor, as he was dragged along.

As Gulian beheld this scene, and heard the cries of Tarleton mingling with the low growl of the dog, his heart relented. He forgot all that Tarleton had made him suffer.

"Cain! Cain!—here, Cain!—here!" he cried; but in vain. Cain had tasted blood. His teeth twined deep in his victim's neck; and his jaws reddened with Tarleton's blood; he did not hear the voice of Gulian.

It was a terrible moment for Tarleton. Uttering frightful imprecations between his

howls of pain, he made a last and desperate effort—an effort strengthened by despair and by pain, which seemed as the pang of death,—he turned, even as the teeth of the dog were in his neck; he clenched the infuriated animal by the throat. Then took place a brief but horrible contest, in which the dog and the man rolled over each other, the man clutching, as with a death-grasp, the throat of the dog, and the dog burying his teeth in the man's shoulder.

Gulian could bear the sight no longer; he sank, half fainting, against the bureau, and hid his eyes from the light.

Presently, the uproar of the combat—the growl of the dog, and the cries of Tarleton—were succeeded by a dead stillness.

Gulian raised his eyes.

Tarleton stood in the center of the room, his face and white coat bathed in blood—his bowie-knife, also dripping with blood, held aloft in his right hand. He presented a frightful spectacle. His coat was rent over the right shoulder, and his mangled flesh was discernible. And that face, whose death-like pallor was streaked with blood, bore an expression of anguish and of madness, which chilled Gulian's heart but to behold.

At his feet was stretched the huge carcass of the dog. The gash across his throat, from which the blood was streaming over the floor, had been inflicted by the hand of the colonel, in the extremest moment of his despair. Cain had fought his last battle. As Tarleton shook the bloody knife over his head, the brave old dog uttered his last moan and died.

"It will not do, my child—it will not do," and Tarleton burst into a loud and unnatural laugh. "You must go with me! With me, alive or dead." He rushed towards Gulian, brandishing the knife. "Oh, you d—d wretch! do you know that I've a notion to cut you into pieces, limb by limb?"

"Mercy! mercy!" shrieked the boy, falling on his knees, as that face, dabbled in blood, and writhing, as with madness, in every feature, glowered over him.

But Tarleton did not strike. He placed his hand upon his forehead, and made a desperate effort to recall his shattered senses. Suffering intolerable physical agony, he was

yet firm in the purpose which had led him to the old mansion.

"If I can get this boy to the carriage, all will yet be well!" he muttered. "I'll faint soon from loss of blood; but not until this boy is in my power. Brain, do not fail me now!"

He dropped the bloody knife upon the carcass of the dog; and, taking a handkerchief from his pocket, he bound it tightly around his throat. Then, lifting his cloak from the floor, he wound it about him, and writhed with pain, as it touched the wound on his shoulder.

"Now will you go with me alive, or dead?" He lifted the knife again, and advanced to Gulian. "Take your choice. If your choice is life,"—he could not refrain a cry of pain—"take the light and go on before me!"

Trembling in every limb, his gaze riveted to the face of Tarleton, Gulian took the light, and crossed the threshold of the room. Tarleton followed him with measured step, still clutching the knife in his right hand.

"On—on!" muttered Tarleton; "attempt to escape, and I strike,—on—," and he reeled like a drunken man, and fell insensible at Gulian's feet.

CHAPTER II.

RANDOLPH AND HIS BROTHER.

THE hour of dawn drew near, Randolph was in his own chamber, seated by his bed, watching the face of the sleeper, who was slumbering there.

A singular look passed over Randolph's visage, as he held the candle over the sleeper's face,—a look hard to define or analyze, for it seemed to indicate a struggle between widely different emotions. There was compassion and revenge, brotherly love and mortal hatred in that look.

For the sleeper was Harry Royalton, of Hill Royal.

The candle burned near and nearer to its socket,—the morning light began to mingle with its fading rays,—and still Harry slept on, and still Randolph watched, his eyes fixed on his brother's visage, and his own face disturbed by opposing emotions.

It was near morning when Harry woke.

"Hey! halloo! what's this?" he cried, starting up in the bed, and surveying the spacious apartment,—strange to him,—with a vacant stare. "Where am I?"

His gaze fell upon Randolph, who was seated by the bed.

"You here?" and his countenance fell.—

"What in the devil does all this mean?"

Randolph did not reply. There was a slight trembling of his nether lip, and his eyes grew brighter as he fixed his gaze on his brother's face.

"Where's my coat?" cried Harry, surveying his shirt sleeves, "and my cravat,"—he passed his hands over his muscular throat,—and—*you*,—what in the devil are *you* doing here?"

Randolph, still keeping his gaze on his brother's face, said in a low voice,—*"I am in my own house, brother."*

"Your house?" ejaculated Harry, and then burst into a laugh,—*"come, now,—don't,—that's too good."*

"My own house, to which I brought you some hours ago, after I had rescued you from the persons in the cellar——"

"Rescued me?" and an incredulous smile passed over Harry's face as he pulled at his bushy whiskers. "Better yet,—*ha! ha!*—You don't think to stuff me with any such damned nonsense?"

Randolph grew paler, but his eye flashed with deeper light.

"Brother, I did rescue you," he said, in the same low voice, as he bent forward.—*"As we were about to engage in conflict, you fell like a dead man on the floor. I took you in my arms; I defended you from the negroes who were clamorous for your blood; I bore you to upper air, and I, brother, then brought you in a carriage to my home; and I laid you on my bed, brother; and when you awoke from your swoon,—awoke with the ravings of delirium on your tongue,—I soothed you, until you fell in a sound sleep. This is the simple truth, brother."*

Harry grew red in the face, then pale,—bit his lip,—pulled his whiskers, and then without turning his head, regarded Randolph with a sidelong glance. To tell the simple truth, Harry did not know what to say. He felt a swelling of the heart, a warmth in his veins, as though the magnetic gaze of

Randolph had influenced him even against his will.

"You did all this?"—there was a faint tremor in his voice.

"I did, brother,"—Randolph's voice was deep and earnest.

"Why,—why,—did not you kill me, when you had me in your power?"

"Brother, the blood of John Augustus Royalton flows in my veins, and it is not like a Royalton to strike a fallen foe."

"And you could have put poison in my drink," hesitated Harry, impressed against his will by the manner of his brother.

"I never heard of a Royalton who became a poisoner."

"A Royalton? and you call yourself a Royalton?" said Harry, still regarding his brother with a sidelong gaze.

Randolph bit his lip, and folded his arms upon his chest, as if to choke down the strong emotions which were struggling within him. He did not reply.

"I suppose I am your prisoner?" asked Harry, intently regarding Randolph's face. You can keep me secluded until the twenty-fifth of December has passed. Is that the dodge?"

"Brother, the door is open, and the way is free, whenever you wish to leave this house," was Randolph's calm reply.

"Well, if I can make you out, may I be——!" cried Harry, and the next moment uttered a groan of agony, for his back was very painful. "Why did you not take me to my hotel?" he said, in a peevish, impatient tone.

"You forget that I did not know the name of your hotel," replied Randolph, "and beside, what place so fitting for a sick man as his brother's home?"

Harry grew red in the face, and then burst into a laugh.—"We've been such good brothers to each other!"

The thought which had been working at Randolph's heart for hours, now found utterance in words,—

"Brother, O, brother! why can we not indeed be brothers?" his eyes flashed, his voice was deep and impassioned. "Children of one father, let us forget the past; let us bury all bitter memories, all feelings of hatred,—let us forget, forgive, and be as broth-

ers to each other. Harry Royalton, my brother, there is my hand."

He rose,—his chest heaving, his eyes dimmed by tears,—and reached forth his hand.

Harry, completely overwhelmed by this unexpected appeal, reached forth his hand, but drew it back again.

"No," he cried, as his face was flushed,— "not with a nigger." The contempt, the scorn, the rage which convulsed his face, as he said these words, cannot be depicted.

CHAPTER III.

THE HUSBAND AND THE PROFLIGATE.

THE boat was upon the river, borne onward over the wintery waves and through the floating ice, by the strong arms of two sturdy oarsmen.

Behind, like a huge black wall, was the city, a faint line of light separating its roofs from the bleak sky. Around were the waves, loaded with piles of floating ice, which crashed together with incessant uproar; and through the gloom the boat drove onward, bearing one man, perchance two men, to certain death.

Eugene and Robert, muffled in their cloaks, sat side by side on the stern; Beverly and his friend, the major, also muffled in their cloaks, sat side by side in the bow.

Eugene had drawn his cloak over his face as if to hide even from the faint light, the agony which was gnawing at his heart-strings.

"In case anything should happen," whispered Robert, "have you any message to send to her?"

"None," was the reply, uttered in a choking voice.

"Damn her!" said Robert, between his teeth.

Meanwhile, in the bow of the boat, Beverly, shuddering within his thick cloak, not so much from cold as from a mental cause, said to his friend, the major,—

"No way to get out o' this, I suppose, major?"

"None," said the major.

"I'd give a horse for a mouthful of good brandy——"

"Here it is," and the major drew a

wicker flask from the folds of his cloak. "I always carry a pocket-pistol; touch her light."

It may be that Beverly "touched her light," but he held the flask to his mouth for a long time, and did not return it to the major until its contents were considerably diminished.

"A cursed scrape," he muttered. "If anything happens, what 'll become of my daughter?" It seems he had a motherless child,—“and then there's the Van Huyden estate. If he wings me, all my hope of that is gone,—of course it is.”

At length the broad river was crossed, and the oarsmen ran the boat into a sheltered cove, some three miles above Hoboken.

The first glimpse of the coming morn stole over the broad river, the distant city, and the magnificent bay.

"Wait for us,—you know what I told you?" said Robert to the oarsmen, who were stout fellows, in rough overcoats, and tarpaulin hats.

"Ay, ay sir," they responded in a breath.

"Major, you lead the way," said Robert, "up the heights we'll find a quiet place."

The Major took Beverly by the arm, and began to climb the steep ascent, over wildly scattered rocks, and among leafless trees.

They were followed by Robert and Eugene arm in arm.

After much difficult wayfaring, they reached the summit of the heights, just in time to catch the first ray of the rising sun, as it shot upward, among the leaden clouds of the eastern horizon.

All at once the steeples of the city caught the glow, and the distant day blushed scarlet and gold on every wave.

Among the heights,—may be some three miles above Hoboken,—there is a quiet nook, imbosomed, in the summer time, in foliage, and opening to the south-east, in a view of the Empire City, and Manhattan Bay. A place as level as a floor, bounded on all sides save one, by oak, and chestnut and cedar, with great rocks piled like monuments of a long passed age, among the massive trunks. It is green in summer time, with a carpet-like sward, and then the tree branches are woven together by fragrant vines; there are flowers about the rocks and around the roots of the old trees,—a balmy, drowsy atmosphere of

June pervades the place. And looking to the east, or south-east, you see the broad river dotted with snowy sails, the great city, with its steeples glittering in the light, and with the calm, clear, vast Heaven arching overhead. 'The Bay gleams in the distance, white with sails, or shadowed here and there by the steamer's cloud of smoke, and far away Staten Island closes the horizon like a wall. Standing by one of these huge rocks, encircled by the trees, and steeped in the quiet of the place, you gaze upon the distant city, like one contemplating a far off battle-field, in which millions are engaged, and the fate of empires is the stake. A sadder battle-field, sun never shone upon, than the Empire City, in which millions are battling every moment of the hour, and battling all life long for fame, for wealth, for bread, for life. Sometimes the quiet nook rings with the laugh of happy children, who come here to stretch themselves upon the grass, and gather flowers among the rocks, and around the nooks of the grand old trees.

Far different is the scene on this drear winter morning. The trees are leafless; they raise their skeleton arms against the cold bleak sky. The rocks, no longer clad in vines and flowers, are grim and bare, with crowns of snow upon their summits. The glade itself, no longer clad with velvet-like sward, is faded and brown. The rising sun trembles through the leafless trees, invests the rocks with a faint glow of rosy light, and falls along the brown surface of the glade, investing it for a moment with a cheerful gleam.

And in the light of the rising sun, in sight of river, city, and distant bay, two men stand ready for the work of death.

The ground is measured; the seconds stand apart; before the fatal word is given, the combatants survey each other.

Eugene, with bared head, stands on the north, his slender form enveloped in a closely buttoned frock-coat. He is lividly pale, but the hand which grasps the pistol does not tremble. Notwithstanding the bitter cold, there is moisture on his forehead; the fire which burns in his eyes, tells you that his emotion is anything but fear. One glance toward the city,—one thought perhaps of other days,—and he is ready.

Opposite, in the south, his hat drawn over his flaxen curls, his tall form enveloped in a close fitting frock-coat, Beverly with an uncertain eye and trembling hand, is nerving himself for the fatal moment. He is afraid. As he catches a glimpse of the face of Eugene, his heart dies within him. All color has forsook his usually florid face.

"Gentlemen, you will fire when I give the word,—” cries Major Barton from the background of withered shrubbery. "Are you ready?"

But at this moment the voice of Beverly is heard—"Eugene! Eugene!" he cries, and starts forward, rapidly diminishing the ten paces, which lie between them—"Eugene! Eugene! my friend—can I make no apology, no reparation—"

Both Robert and the Major, saw Eugene's face, as he turned toward the seducer. The sun, which had been obscured by a passing cloud, shone out again, and shone full upon the face of Eugene. The look which stamped every line of that bronzed visage, was never forgotten by those who beheld it. O, the withering scorn of the lip, the concentrated hatred of the dark eyes, the utter loathing which impressed every lineament!

"Friend!" he echoed, as for a moment he looked Beverly in the face—and then turning to Barton, he said quietly: "Major take your man away. If he is a coward as well as a scoundrel, let us know it."

The look appalled Beverly; he receded step by step, unable to take his eyes from Eugene's face;—

"Be a man, curse you," whispered Barton who had glided to his side—"D'ye hear?" and he clutched him by the arm, with a grasp, that made Beverly writhe with pain—"Take your place, and fire as I give the word."

In a moment, Beverly was in his place, his right hand grasping his pistol, dropped by his side, which was presented toward Eugene, who, ten paces off, stood in a corresponding position.

Barton retired to the background, taking his place beside Robert. "Gentlemen, I am about to give the word!" said Barton, and then there was a pause like death,—“One—two—three! Fire!

They wheeled and fired, Eugene with a fixed and decided aim; Beverly with eyes

swimming in terror, and hand trembling with fright. The smoke of the pistols curled gracefully through the wintery air. Beverly stumbled as he fired, and fell on one knee; Eugene stood bolt upright for a moment, the pistol in his extended hand, and then fell flat upon his face.

Eugene's bullet sank into the cedar tree, directly behind where Beverly's head had been, only a moment before. Beverly was uninjured. No doubt the false step which he had made in wheeling had saved his life.

Eugene lay flat upon his face, the pistol still clutched in his extended hand.

The brother of Joanna rushed forward and raised him to his feet,—there was a red wound between his eyes,—he was dead.

The husband had been killed by the seducer of his wife.

Behold the justice of the Law of Duel!

"The damned fool," was the commentary of the phlegmatic Robert, as with tears gushing from his eyes, he held the body of the dead husband, and at the same time regarded Beverly, who pale with fright, cringed against a tree,—“If he'd a-taken my advice, he'd a-killed you like a dog, last night. He'd a-pitched you from the third story window,—he would,—and mashed your brains out against the pavement."

The sun came out from behind a cloud, and lighted the face of Eugene Livingston, with the red wound between his fixed eyeballs.

CHAPTER IV.

ISRAEL AND HIS VICTIM.

ISRAEL YORKE left the Temple, accompanied by Ninety-One and followed by the eleven. Israel, clad once more in his everyday *practical* dress, with his hat drawn over his bald head, and his diminutive form enveloped in a loose sack of dark cloth, looked like a dwarf beside the almost gigantic frame of Ninety-One. Yet Ninety-One, with creditable politeness, gave his arm to the Financier, and urged him onward in the darkness, toward Broadway, something in the manner that you may have seen a very willing boy, assist the progress of a very unwilling dog,—the boy's hand being attached to one end of a string, and the dog's neck to the other. And Ninety-One cheered

Israel with various remarks of a consolatory character, such as, "go in gold specks! let her went my darlin'! don't give it up so easy!"—and so-forth.

"It's so dark, and I'm so devilish cold," whined Israel, in vain endeavoring to keep pace with the giant strides of his huge companion,—“Where the deuce are we going anyhow?”

"Come along feller sinners," said Ninety-One, looking over his shoulders at the eleven who followed sturdily in the rear. The eleven did not deign to express themselves in words, but manifested some portion of their feelings, by bringing their clubs upon the pavement, with something of the force of thunder, and more of the wickedness of a suddenly *slammed* door. "Where are we leadin' you to? To one of yer tenants, Isr'el,—one of yer tenants, you pertikler example of all the christ'in vartues,—"

"To one of my tenants!" echoed Israel.

"To one of yer tenants," repeated Ninety-One, and he crossed a curb as he spoke, and gave Israel's arm a wrench which nearly tore the arm from Israel's body.—“You know you've got to pay cash for your bank notes to-day, an' you'll need all the money you can rake and scrape. To-day's rent day,—isn't it? Well we're goin' on a collectin' tower among yer tenants. Aint we feller sinners?”

He turned his head over his shoulder, and again the clubs thundered their applause.

"I'll be deuced if I can make you out," said Israel arranging his 'specks,' which had been displaced by one of the eccentric movements of Ninety-One,—and Israel felt very much like the man who, finding himself late at night, very unexpectedly in the same bed-room with a bear, desired exceedingly to get out of the room, but thought it no more than proper to be civil to the bear until he did get out.

"Don't you own a four story house in ——— street?" asked Ninety-One.

"I do. Four stories,—two to four rooms on a floor,—besides the cellar and the garret,—a fine property,—and, to-day is rent day—"

"You stow 'em away like maggots in a stale cheese,—do you?" and Ninety-One stopped, and regarded the little man admi-

ringly,—added in an under tone, "Moses! How I'd like to have the picklin' of you!"

Thus conversing, they entered Broadway, along which they passed for some distance, and at last turned down a by-street, the eleven following them closely all the while.

They stood in front of a huge edifice, four stories high, formerly the residence of a Wall street nabob, but now the abode of,—we are afraid to say how many families. The basement was, of course, occupied as a manufactory of New York politics,—in simple phrase, it was a grog-shop; and although the hour was exceedingly late, its door was wide open, and the sound of drunken voices and the fragrance of bad rum, ascended together upon the frosty air. Save the basement, the entire front of the mansion was dark as ink; the poor wretches who burrowed in its many rooms, were doubtless sleeping after the toil of the winter's day.

"In the fourth story you have a tenant named ———?" whispered Ninety-One.

"Yes; a poor devil," responded Israel Yorke.

"Let's go up an' see the poor devil," said Ninety-One, and grasping Israel firmly by the arm, he passed through the front door and up the narrow stairway.

The eleven followed in silence, supporting Israel firmly in the rear.

As they reached the head of the fourth stairway, Ninety-One put forth his brawny hand, and,—in the darkness,—felt along the wall.

"Here's the door," he whispered, "in a minnit we'll bust in upon your tenant like a thousand o' brick."

Israel felt himself devoured by curiosity, suspense, and fear.

As for the eleven gathering around Israel closely in the darkness, they preserved a dead silence, only broken for a moment by the exclamation of one of their number,—“What a treat it 'ud be to pitch this here cuss down stairs!”

"Hush, boys! hark!" said Ninety-One, and laid his hand upon the latch of the door.

Before we enter the door and gaze upon the scene which Ninety-One disclosed to the gaze of Israel Yorke, our history must retrace its steps.

It was nightfall, and the light of the lamps glittering among the leafless trees of the Park, mingled with the last flush of the departed day, and the mild, tremulous rays of the first stars of evening. At the corner of Broadway and Chambers street, two young men held each other by the hand, as they talked together. The contrast between their faces and general appearance was most remarkable, even for this world of contrasts. One tall in stature, with florid cheeks, and blue eyes glittering with life and hope, was the very picture of health. He was dressed at the top of the fashion. A sleekly-brushed beaver sat jauntily upon his chesnut curls; an overcoat of fine gray cloth fitted closely to his vigorous frame, and by its rolling collar, suffered his blue scarf and diamond pin to be visible; his hands were gloved, and he carried a delicate cane, adorned with a head of amber; and his voice and laugh rung out so cheerily upon the frosty air!

The other,—alas! for the contrast,—dressed in a long overcoat of faded brown cloth, resembled a living skeleton. His face was terribly emaciated; his cheeks sunken; his eyes hollow. His voice was low and husky. As he spoke, his eyes lighted up like fire-coals, and seemed to burn in his sallow and withered face. His hair, black as jet, and straight and long, only made his countenance seem more pale and death-like. He was evidently in the last stage of consumption, and his dress, neat as it was,—the faded brown coat, and much-worn hat carefully brushed,—betokened poverty, and the saddest poverty of all,—that which tries, and vainly, to hide itself under a “decent” exterior.

And thus they met, at the corner of Chambers street and Broadway, Lewis Harding, the rich broker and man of fashion, and John Martin, the poor artist and—dying man. They had been playmates and school-fellows in other years. Five years ago, they left the academy, in a country town, to try their fortunes in the world; both orphans, both young, both full of life and hope, and—poor. Harding had taken the world as he found it, adopted its philosophy,—“Success is the only test of merit,”—and became a rich broker and a man of fashion. John Martin had taken the world as it ought to

have been,—believed in the goodness of mankind, and in the certainty of honest success following honest labor—of hand and brain,—steadily devoted to the elevation of man. He became an artist, and,—we see him before us now.

“Why, Jack, my dear fellow, what are you doing out in the cold air?” said Harding, in his kindly voice. “You ought to be more careful of yourself,——”

“I am out in the cold air, because I cannot breathe freely in the house,” answered the artist, with a smile on his cadaverous lips.

“But you have no cough,—you’ll be better in spring.”

“True, I have no cough, but the doctor informed me to day that my right lung was entirely gone, and my left hard after it; the simple truth is, I am wasting to death; and I hate the idea of dying in bed. I want to keep on my feet,—I want to keep in the air,—I want to die on my feet.”

Harding had rapidly grown into a man of the world, but somehow the tears started into his eyes.

“But you must keep up your spirits, Jack,—in the spring you will be——”

“In my grave, Harding; there’s no use of lying about it.”

And his eyes flared up, and a bitter smile moved his lips.

“O, how’s the wife and children?” said Harding, as though anxious to change the conversation.

“They are well,” said John, and a singular look passed over his face.

“And your sister?”

“Eleanor is well,”—and the vivid brightness of his eyes was for a moment veiled in moisture.

“O, by-the-bye, I met Nelly the other day,” said Harding. “Bless my soul! what a handsome little girl she has grown! It was in a store where they sell embroidered work. I was pricing a set of regalia,—thirty dollars they said was the price,—and little Nell had worked on it about three weeks for five dollars. Great world, Jack!”

“Good night, Harding,” said the artist, quietly.

“But let me accompany you home,——”

“I’d rather you would not. Good night, Harding.”

"But God bless you, John, can't I do anything for you?"

"Why, why after I am dead,"—and the words seemed to stick in his throat,—“after I am dead,—my wife,—my sister,—” he could say no more.

"I swear that I will protect them," said Harding, warmly. John quietly pressed his hand, and turned his face away. After a moment they parted, Harding down Broadway on his way to the theater, and John up Broadway, on his way home. And Harding gazed after John for a moment,—“I'm glad he didn't want to borrow money! Nell is quite a beauty!”

Walking slowly, and pausing every now and then to breathe, John gazed in the bright shop-windows, and into the contrasted faces of the hurrying crowd as he passed along.

"Soon this will be all over for me," he muttered, with a husky laugh. "I'm afraid, friend John, that you are taking your last walk."

An arm was gently thrust through his own, and a voice light and trilling as the notes of a bird, said quietly,—

"I'm so glad I've caught up with you John,"—and he leaned upon that gentle arm, and turned to look upon the face of the speaker. It was his sister Eleanor, a very pretty child of some fourteen years, dressed in a faded cloak, and with a hood on her dark hair. Her complexion was a rich brown, tinged with red in the cheeks; her eyes, brows and hair, all black as midnight. And by turns, over that face, in which the woman began to mingle with the child, there flitted a look of the brightest joyousness, and an expression of the most touching melancholy.

"I've just been taking my work home, John. They paid me half a dollar for what I have done this week, (and that, you know, John, will keep us in bread and coal to-morrow,) and O, I am so glad you've got eight dollars saved for the rent. I am so glad! The rent is due to-morrow, and the landlord is such a hard man."

"Yes, I have eight dollars," John said, and there was an indefinable accent marking every word. "Yes, Nelly, dear, I have eight dollars."

"John, do tell me, who are those good ladies who pass us every moment, dressed so richly,—all in velvet, and satin, and jewels; who are they, John?"

John stopped,—bent upon his cane,—looked for a moment upon the crowd which whirled past him,—and then into the happy, innocent face of his sister. And then his shrunken chest heaved with a sigh. "O God!" he said, in a low voice.

"Who are they, John,—do tell me,—they must be very, O, ever so rich."

"Those handsome ladies, dressed so gaudily, Nelly, are sisters and daughters. Once they had brothers and fathers who protected them, and now their fathers and brothers are dead. The world takes care of them now, Nelly."

The poor girl heard his words, but did not guess their hidden meaning. Still supporting her brother on her arm, she continued,—

"Do you know, John, that your handsome friend, Mr. Harding, met me in the store the other day, and said he took such an interest in me, and that if I chose I might be dressed as rich and gayly as these grand ladies, who pass us every moment."

John started as though he had trodden upon a snake. "And only a moment ago he promised to protect her when I am gone," he muttered,—“*Protection!*”

And thus they passed along until turning into a by-street, they came near their home, which was composed of a single room, up four pairs of stairs, in a four-storied edifice. At the street door they were met by a young woman, plainly,—meagerly clad, but with a finely-rounded form, and a countenance, rich, not only in loveliness, but in all the goodness of womanly affection. It was the artist's wife.

"O, John, I have been so anxious about you," she said, and took him by the arm; and while Nelly held the other, she gently led him through the doorway and up the dark stairs. "Why will you go out when it is so cold?"

"I want air, Annie, *air*," he returned in his hollow voice,—“and I will die on my feet.”

And the wife and sister helped the dying artist gently up the stairs; gently, slowly, step by step, and led him at last over the

threshold, into that room which was their home.

About an hour afterward, John was seated in an arm-chair, in the center of that home, whose poverty was concealed as much as might be, by the careful exertions of his wife and sister. In the arm-chair, his death-like face looking ghastly in the candle-light,—his wife, a woman of *blonde* countenance, blue eyes, and chesnut-hair, on one side; his sister, with her dark hair, and clear, deep eyes, on the other; each holding a hand of the husband and the brother. A boy of four years, sat on a stool, looking up quietly with his big eyes into his father's face; and near, a little girl of three years, who took her brother by the hand, and also looked in the face of the dying artist. Very beautiful children; plainly clad, it is true, but beautiful; the girl with light hair and blue eyes, reflecting the mother, while the boy, dark-haired and black-eyed, was the image of the father.

The table, spread with the remains of the scanty meal, stood near; the grate was filled with lighted coals; a bed with a carefully patched coverlet stood in one corner; between the two windows was placed an old-fashioned bureau; and two pictures adorned the neatly whitewashed walls.

Such was the picture, and such the artist's home.

The stillness which had prevailed since supper, was at length broken by the voice of John.

"Annie, I'll leave you soon," he said, quietly, and his eyes lighted up.—"O, wouldn't it be a good thing if we could all die together! To die, I do not fear, but to leave you all,—and in such a world! O, my God! such a world!"

Annie buried her face in her hands, and rested her hands against the arm of the chair. Nelly, her large eyes brimful of tears, quietly put his hand to her lips. And the little boy, in his childish way, asked what "to die" meant.

"Bring me that picture, Nelly,"—he pointed to a picture on the wall. She went and brought it quietly. "Now let down the window a little, for I feel the want of air, and come and sit by me again."

He took the picture and gazed upon it

earnestly and long. It was a picture of himself, in the prime of young manhood, the cheeks rounded, the eyes full of hope, the brow, shaded by glossy black hair, stamped with genius. A picture taken only sixteen months before.

"Only sixteen months ago, Nelly," he said. Only sixteen months ago, Annie; and now—well, there's a crayon sketch on the bureau, which I took of myself the other day, as I looked in the glass. Bring it, Nelly."

His sister brought the crayon sketch; and, with a sad smile, he held it beside the other picture. It was all too faithful. His prominent cheek bones, hollow cheeks, colorless lips, and sunken eyes, all were copied there; only the deathly fire of the eyes was lacking.

"A sad contrast, isn't it, Annie? When this picture was taken, sixteen months ago, we were all doing well. My pictures sold; some lithographs which I executed, met also with ready sale. I had as much as I could do, and everything was bright before me. I even thought of a tour to Italy! Don't you remember our nice little cottage out in the country, Nell? But I was taken sick—sick;—I couldn't work any longer. Our money was soon spent; and you, Annie, made shirts; and you, Nelly, you embroidered; and that kept us thus far—and—" he stopped, and gazed upon his wife and sister, who were weeping silently: and then upon his children. "And now I must go and leave you in this world.—Oh, my God! such a world!"

"Don't think of us, John," said his wife. "If you could only live,—"

"Oh, you will—you will get better, as the spring comes on," exclaimed Nelly; "and we'll go into the country, on the first sunny day, and gather flowers there."

John drew forth from his vest pocket certain pieces of paper, which he spread forth upon his knee. Bank notes, each marked with the figure 2, and signed by the name of Israel Yorke, (a prominent banker of the *bogus* stamp,) in a bold hand. There were four in all.

"This is the eight dollars, Annie, which I saved to pay our rent," said the artist.

The wife and sister gazed upon the bank

notes earnestly—for those bank notes were their last hope. Those bank notes were “rent money;” and of all money on the earth of God, none is so bitterly earned by Poverty, nor so pitilessly torn from its grasp by the hand of Avarice, as “rent money.”

“Well,—well;”—and John paused, as if the words choked him. “These notes are not worth one penny. All of Israel Yorke’s banks broke to-day.”

There was not a word spoken for five minutes, or more. This news went like an ice-bolt through the hearts of the wife and sister.

“And to-morrow we’ll be put into the street by this same Israel Yorke, who is also our landlord;” said John, breaking the long pause. “Put the window a little lower, Nelly—it feels close—I want air.”

Nelly obeyed; and resumed her seat at her brother’s face, which now glowed on the cheeks and shone in the eyes with an expression which she could not define.

“Oh, would n’t it be good, Annie—would not it be glorious, Nelly—if I could gather you all up in my arms and take you with me, whither I am going?” he said, with a sort of rapture, looking from his children to his wife and sister. And then, in a gentler tone: “Kneel down, Nelly, and say a prayer, and ask God to forgive us all our sins—*all*, remember,—and to smooth the way for us, so that we may all go to Him.”

Neither Nelly nor Annie remarked the singular emphasis which accompanied these words.

Nelly knelt in their midst, and prayed.

As she uttered that simple and child-like prayer, John fixed his eyes upon her face, and muttered, “And so he took a great *interest* in you, and would dress you gayly, would he?”

Then he said, aloud, in a kind of wild and wandering way—“Now we’ve had our last supper, and our last prayer. It will soon be time for us to go. Call me, love, in time for the cars.”

He paused, and raised his hand to his forehead,—

“Don’t cry, Annie; my mind wanders a little—that’s all. I want rest. I’ll take a little sleep in the chair, and you and Nelly, and the children, lay down in the bed. And

let me kiss the children, and do you all kiss me—”

The young mother lifted the little boy and girl, and they pressed their kiss upon the lips of the dying man. Then the wife and the sister; their tears mingling on his face, as their lips were pressed by turns to his lips and brow.

“Come, Nelly,” whispered the wife, “we’ll lay down, but we will not sleep. He will take a little rest if he thinks we are sleeping.

Presently the sister and the wife, with the children near them, were resting on the bed, their hands silently joined. They conversed in low tones, while the children fell gently asleep. But gradually their conversation died away in inarticulate whispers; and they also slept.

And the artist—did he sleep? By no means. Sitting erect in his arm-chair, his back toward the bed, and his eyes every instant glittering bright and brighter, he listened intently to the low whispers of his wife and sister. “At last they sleep!” he cried, as the sound of their calm, regular breathing struck his ears. “They sleep—they sleep! They sleep—wife, sister, children; Annie, Nelly, little John, and little Annie,—they all sleep.”

And he burst into tears.

But his death-stricken face was radiant through his tears—radiant with intense joy.

John sat silently contemplating a small image of white marble, which he had taken from one of the drawers of the bureau. It represented the MASTER on the cross.

“Better go to God, and trust him, than trust to the mercy of man,” he frequently murmured.

After much silent thought he rose, and, from beneath the bureau drew forth two objects into the light—a sack and a small plaster furnace. He placed the furnace in the center of the floor, and half filled it with lighted coals from the grate. Then he poured the contents of the sack upon the burning coals; his hands trembling, and his eyes, fiery as they were, suddenly dimmed by moisture.

“Charcoal, good charcoal—such a blessing to the poor! Nelly didn’t know what a blessing it was, when I sent her for it this afternoon—that is, yesterday afternoon. It

takes fire—it burns—such a mild, rich blue flame! Opium and charcoal are the poor man's best friends. They cost so little, and they save one from so much,"—as he knelt on the floor, he cast his gaze over his shoulder toward the bed—"so very much! They will save us all from so much!"

Nelly murmured in her sleep, and rose in bed, and, opening her eyes, gazed at her brother, kneeling by the lighted furnace, with a wild dreamy stare. Then she lay down and slept again.

The charcoal burned brightly, its pale blue flame casting a spectral glow over the face of the kneeling man, so haggard and death-stricken. The noxious gas began to fill the room. John rose and went, with unsteady steps to the window, and eagerly inhaled the fresh air. Resting his arms upon the sash, he felt the cold air upon his cheek, and looked out and upward,—there was the dark blue sky set with stars.

"In which of them, I wonder, will we all meet again?" he said, in a wandering way. *Then he tottered from the window to the bed. The air was stifling. He breathed only in gasps.

By the bed again, gazing upon them all,—wife, sister, children,—so beautiful in their slumber.

And they began to move restlessly in their sleep, and mutter half-coherent words, and—"In the spring time, John, we'll gather flowers," said Nelly; "You'll be better soon, John," whispered the wife; and all was still again.

Back to the window, with unsteady steps, to inhale another mouthful of fresh air—to take another look at the cold, cold winter stars.

Brighter burns the charcoal; the pale blue flame hovers there, in the center of the room like an infernal halo. And there is Death in the air.

Breathing in gasps, John tottered from the window again. He took the image in one hand, the candle in the other; and thus, on tip-toe, he approached the bed.

A very beautiful sight. Little John and little Annie sleeping side by side, a glow upon their cheeks,—Nelly and Annie sleeping hand joined in hand; their beautiful faces invested with a smile that was all quietness

and peace. They did not murmur in their sleep this time.

John's eyes glared strangely as he stood gazing upon them. "And did you think, Annie, he said softly, putting his hand upon her head, "that I'd leave you in this world, to work and to slave, and to rear our children up to work and to slave, and eat the bitter bread of poverty? And you, Nelly, did you think I'd leave you to slave here, until your soul was sick; and then, some day, when work failed, and starvation looked in at the window, to sell yourself to some rich scoundrel for bread? No, wife—no sister—no, children: *I have gathered you up in my arms, and we're all going together!*"

He kissed them one by one, and then tottered back toward the lighted furnace—toward his chair—the light which he held, shining fully over his withered face and flaming eyes. In one hand he still grasped the marble image. He had gained half the distance to his chair, when the door opened. A man of middle age, clad in sober black, his hair gray, and his hooked nose supporting gold spectacles, appeared on the threshold.

"Ah, Doctor, is that you?" cried John, "I thought it was the landlord;—you've come too late, Doctor, too late."

"Too late? What mean you, Mr. Martin?" said the doctor, advancing into the room—but starting back again, as he encountered the poisoned air.

"Too late—too late!" cried John, the candle trembling in his unsteady grasp, as he raised his skeleton-like form to its full height—"We're all cured,—"

"Cured? What mean you? How cured?"

"Cured of—life!" said John; and, stepping quickly forward, he fell at the doctor's feet.

The doctor seized the light as he fell, and attempted to raise him from the floor,—but John was dead in his arms.

Our history now returns to Israel Yorke, whom, with Ninety-One and the eleven, we left waiting in the dark, outside the artist's door.

"Hush, boys! hush!" whispered Ninety One, and laid his hand upon the latch "Enter, Isr'el, and talk to yer tenant."

The door opened, and Israel entered, followed by Ninety-One and the eleven, all of whom preserved a dead stillness.

A single light was burning dimly in the artist's humble room. It cast its rays over the humble details of the place,—over the bed, which was covered by a white sheet. The place was deathly still.

"What does all this mean?" cried Israel. "There is no one here." Ninety-One took the light from the table, and led Israel silently to the bed. The eleven gathered round in silence; you could hear their hard breathing through the dead stillness of the room. Ninety-One lifted the sheet, slowly; his harsh features quivering in every fiber.

"That's what it means," he said hoarsely.

They were there, side by side; the husband and the wife, the sister and the children—there, cold and dead. The light, as it fell upon them, revealed the wasted face of the artist, his closed eyelids, sunken far in their sockets, his dark hair glued to her forehead by the moisture of death; and the face of his young wife, with her fair cheek and sunny hair; and the sad, beautiful face of his sister, whose dark hair lay loosely upon her neck, while the long fringes of her eyelashes rested darkly upon her cheek. There was a look of anguish upon the face of John, as though Poverty had struck its iron seal upon him as he died; but the faces of Annie and Nelly were calm, smiling—very full of peace. The little children—the dark-haired boy, and bright-haired girl—slept quietly, their hands clasped and their cheeks laid close together. The poor artist, in the last wild hour of his life, had indeed gathered them up in his arms and taken them with him. They had all gone together.

The furnace, with the fire put out, still remained in the center of the room.

Such was the scene which the light disclosed; a scene incredible only to those who, unfamiliar with the ACTUAL of the large city, do not know that all the boasted triumphs of our modern civilization but miserably compensate for the POVERTY which it has created, and which stalks side by side with it, at every step of its progress, like a skeleton beside a painted harlot;—a poverty which gives to the phrase, "*I am poor!*" a

despair unknown even in the darkest ages of the most barbarous past.

"They are asleep,—asleep, certainly," cried Israel, falling back, "they can't be dead."

The truth is, that Israel felt exceedingly uncomfortable.

"They aint asleep,—they *are* dead," hoarsely replied Ninety-One, and he grasped Israel fiercely by the wrist. "They are dead, you dog. Look thar! That man owed you eight dollars for rent; he know'd if he didn't pay you this mornin' he'd be pitched into the street, dyin' as he was, with wife and children and sister at his heels. But he'd saved eight dollars, Israel, an' last night he crawled out to take a walk, an' found that his eight dollars was so much trash—found out that yer banks had broke, an' his eight dollars in yer bank notes, was wuss than nothin'. An' from yer bankin' house he went to a drug store, an' from a friend he got a quick an' quiet p'ison. He came home; he put it in the coffee, slyly; they all drank of it, an' slep'; an' then he filled the furnace with charcoal an' lighted it, an' *then* they slep' all the better,—an' there they air! out o' yer clutches, dog—out o' yer fangs, hellhound,—gone safe to kingdom come!"

And he clutched Israel's wrist until the little man groaned with pain.

"But how do you know he poisoned himself and these?" faltered Israel.

"He left a scrap o' paper in which he told about it an' the reason for doin' it. The doctor who came in when it was too late, saw the charcoal burnin', an' found the p'ison at the bottom of the cups. An' this man," he pointed to one of the eleven, a sturdy fellow with a frank, honest face, "this man an' his wife live in the next room. He was out last evenin', but she was in, an' she heard poor Martin ravin' about you an' his eight dollars, an' his wife, an' sister, an' children, an' starvation, death, an' the cold dark street. She heered him, I say, but didn't suspec' there was p'ison in the case until the doctor called her in, an' then it was too late."

"But how did you know of all this? What have you to do with it?"

"You see the doctor went an' told the JUDGE, who has just been tryin' you,—told him hours ago, you mind,—an' THE JUDGE

sent me here with you, in order to show you some of yer work. How d'ye like it Isr'el?"

Ninety-One's features were harsh and scarred, but now they quivered with an almost child-like emotion. With his brawny hand he pointed to the bodies of the dead,—

"Thar's eight dollars worth o' yer notes, Isr'el," he said. "Thar's Chow Bunk, Muddy Run, an' Tarrapin Holler! Look at 'em! Don't you think that some day God Almighty will ax you to change them notes?"

And Israel shrank back appalled from the bed. Ninety-One clutched his wrist with a firmer grasp; the eleven gathered closely in his rear, their ominous murmur growing more distinct; and the light, held in the convict's hand, shed its calm rays over the faces of the dead family.

This death-scene in the artist's home, calls up certain thoughts.

Poverty! Did you ever think of the full meaning of that word? The curse of poverty is the cowardice which it breeds, cowardice of body and soul. Many a man who would in full possession of his faculties, pour out his life-blood for a friend, or even for a stranger, will, when it becomes a contest for a crust of bread,—for the last means of a bare subsistence,—steal that crust from the very lips of his starving friend, and would, were it possible, drain the last life-drop in the veins of another, in order to keep life in his own wretched carcass. The savage, starving in the snow, in the center of his desolate prairie, knows nothing of the poverty of the civilized savage, much less of that poverty, which takes the man or woman of refined education, and kills every noble faculty of the soul, before it does its last work on the body. Poverty in the city, is not mere want of bread, but it is the lack of the means to supply innumerable wants, created by civilization,—and that lack is slow moral and physical death. Talk of the bravery of the hero, who, on the battle-field stands up to be shot at, with the chance of glory, on the one hand, and a quick death on the other! How will his heroism compare with that brave man, who in the large city, year after year, and day by day, expends the very life-strings of his soul, in battling against the fangs of want, in keeping some roof-shelter over his wife and children, or those who are

as dependent upon him as wife and children? Proud lady, sitting on your sofa, in your luxurious parlor, you regard with a quiet sneer, that paragraph in the paper (you hold it in your hand), which tells how a virtuous girl, sold her person into the grasp of wealthy lust for—bread! You sneer,—virtue, refined education, beauty, innocence, chastity, all gone to the devil for a—bit of bread! Sneer on! but were you to try the experiment of living two days without—not your carriage and opera-box,—but without bread or fire in the dead of winter, working meanwhile at your needle, with half-frozen fingers for just sixteen pennies per day, you would, I am afraid, think differently of the matter. Instead of two days, read two years, and let your trial be one of perpetual work and want, that never for a moment cease to bite,—I am afraid, beautiful one, were this your case, you would sometimes find yourself thinking of a comfortable life, and a bed of down, purchased by the sale of your body, and the damnation of your soul. And you, friend, now from the quiet of some country village, railing bravely against southern slavery, and finding no word bitter enough to express your hatred of the slave market, in which black men and black women are sold—just look a moment from the window of your quiet home, and behold yonder huge building, blazing out upon the night from its hundred windows. That is a factory. Yes. Have you no pity for the white men, (nearer to you in equality of organization certainly than black men,) who are chained in hopeless slavery, to the iron wheels of yonder factory's machinery? Have you no thought of the white woman, (loverlier to look upon certainly than black women, and in color, in organization, in education, resembling very much your own wife, sister, mother,) who very often are driven by want, from yonder factory to the grave, or to the—brothels of New York? You mourn over black children, sold at the slave block,—have you no tear for white children, who in yonder factory, are deprived of education, converted into mere working machines (without one tithe of the food and comfort of the black slave), and transformed into precocious old men and women, before they have ever felt one free pulse of childhood?

Ah! this enterprise which forms the impulse and the motto of modern civilization, will doubtless in the future ripen into good for all men,—for there is a God,—but the path of its present progress, is littered with human skulls. It weaves, it spins, it builds, it spreads forth on all sides its iron arms,—and it has a good capital,—the blood of human hearts. Labor-saving machinery, (the most awful feature of modern civilization,) will, in the future, when no longer monopolized by the few, do the greater portion of the physical work of the world, and bless the entire race of man,—but until that future arrives, labor-saving machinery will send more millions down to death, than any three centuries of battle-fields, that ever cursed the earth. Yes, modern civilization, is very much like the locomotive, rolling along an iron track, at sixty miles per hour, with hot coals at its heart, and a cloud of smoke and flame above it. Look at it, as it thunders on! What a magnificent impersonation of power; of brute force chained by the mind of man! All true,—but woe, woe to the weak or helpless, who linger on its iron track! and woe to the weak, the crippled, or the poor, whom the locomotive of modern civilization finds lingering *in its way*. Why should it care? It has no heart. Its work is to move onward, and to cut down all, whom poverty and misfortune have left in its path.

There is one phase of poverty which hath no parallel in its unspeakable bitterness. A man of genius with a good heart, and something of the all-overarching spirit of Christ in him, looks around the world, sees the vast sum of human misery, and feels like this, *‘with but a moderate portion of money, what good might not be accomplished!’* and yet that little sum is as much beyond him,—as far beyond his grasp, as the planet Jupiter.

That forth from the womb of the present chaos, a nobler era will be born, no one can doubt, who feels the force of these four words, *‘there is a God.’* And that the present age with its deification of the money power, is one of the basest the world ever saw, cannot be disproved, although it may be bitterly denied. There is something pitiful in the thought that a world once deemed worthy of the tread of Satan, is now become the crawling ground of Mammon.

CHAPTER V.

MARY, CARL, CORNELIUS.

LEAVING Frank to writhe alone in her agony, Nameless and Mary pursued their way through the dark streets, as the morning drew near. They arrived at length, in front of that huge mansion, in Greenwich street, which once the palace of ease and opulence, was now, from the garret to the cellar, the palace of rags, disease and poverty. How Mary's heart thrilled as she led Nameless through the darkness up the marble stairs! A few hours since she went down those stairs, with death in her heart. Now her husband, risen from the grave was on her arm, hope was in her heart, and—although dark and bitter cold, and signs of poverty and wretchedness were all around her,—the future opened before her mental vision, rosy and golden in its hues of promise.

At the head of the stairway, on the fourth story Mary opened a door, and in the darkness, led Nameless across the threshold.

“My home!” she whispered, and lighted the candle, which hours ago, in the moment of her deepest despair, she had extinguished.

As the light stole around the place, Nameless at a glance beheld the miserable garret, with its sloping roof walls of rough boards, and scanty furniture, a mattress in one corner, a sheet-iron stove, a table, and in the recess of the huge garret window an old arm-chair.

“This your home!” he ejaculated and at the same time beheld the occupant of the arm-chair,—in that man prematurely old, his skeleton form incased in a loose wrapper, his emaciated hands resting on the arms, and one side of his corpse-like face on the back of the chair,—he after a long pause, recognized the wreck of his master, Cornelius Berman.

“O, my master!” he cried in a tone of inexpressible emotion, and sank on his knees before the sleeping man, and pressed his emaciated hand reverently to his lips. “Is it thus I find you!” and profoundly affected, he remained kneeling there, his gaze fixed upon that countenance, which despite its premature wrinkles, and dead apathetic expression, still bore upon its forehead,—half hid by

snow-white hair,—some traces of the intellect of Cornelius Berman.

While Nameless knelt there in silence, Mary glided from the room, and after some minutes, again appeared, holding a basket on one arm, while the other held some sticks of wood. Leaving her husband in his reverie, at her father's feet, she built a fire in the sheet-iron stove, and began to prepare the first meal which she had tasted in the course of twenty hours. Continued excitement had kept her up thus far, but her brain began to grow dizzy and her hand to tremble. At length the white cloth was spread on the table, and the rich fragrance of coffee stole through the atmosphere of the dismal garret. The banquet was spread, bread, butter, two cups of coffee,—a sorry sort of banquet say you,—but just for once, try the experiment of twenty-four hours, without food, and you'll change your opinion.

The first faint gleam of the winter morning began to steal through the garret window.

"Come, Carl,"—she glided softly to his side, and tapped him gently on the shoulder, "breakfast is ready. While father sleeps, just come and see what a good housekeeper I am."

He looked up and beheld her smiling, although there were tears in her eyes.

He rose and took his seat beside her at the table. Now the garret was rude and lonely, and the banquet by no means luxurious, and yet Nameless could not help being profoundly agitated, as he took his seat by the side of Mary.

It was the first time, in all his memory, that he had sat down to a table, encircled by the satiety which clusters round the word—*Home*.

His wife was by his side,—this was his—*Home*.

Breakfast over, he once more knelt at the feet of the sleeping man. And Mary knelt by his side, gazing silently into his face, while his gaze was riveted upon her father's countenance. Thus they were, as the morning light grew brighter on the window-pane. At length Mary rested her head upon his bosom, and slept,—he girdled her form in his cloak, and held her in his arms; while

her bosom, heaving gently with the calm pulsation of slumber, was close against his heart. The morning light grew brighter on the window-pane, and touched the white hairs of the father, and shone upon the glowing cheek of the sleeping girl.

Nameless, wide awake, his eyes large and full, and glittering with thought, gazed now upon the face of his old master, and now upon the countenance of his young wife. And then his whole life rose up before him. He was lost in a maze of absorbing thought. His friendless childhood, the day when Cornelius first met him, his student life, in the studies of the artist, the pleasant home of the artist on the river, the hour when he had reddened his hand with blood, his trial, sentence, the day of execution, the burial, the life in the mad-house,—these scenes and memories passed before him, with living shapes and hues and voices. And after all, Mary, his wife was in his arms! The sun now came up, and his first ray shone rosily over the cheeks of the sleeping girl.

Nameless remembered the letter which Frank had given him, and now took it from the side pocket of his coat. He surveyed it attentively. It bore his name, "*GULIAN VAN HUYDEN*."

"What does it contain?" he asked himself the question mentally, little dreaming of the fatal burden which the letter bore.

The sleeping man awoke, and gazed around the apartment with large, lack-luster eyes. At the same time, with his emaciated hand, he tried to clutch the sunbeam which trembled over his shoulder. Nameless felt his heart leap to his throat at the sight of this pitiful wreck of genius.

"Do you not know me, master?" exclaimed Nameless, pressing the hand of the afflicted man, and fixing his gaze earnestly upon his face.

Was it an idle fancy? Nameless thought he saw something like a ray of intelligence flit across that stricken face.

"It is I, Carl Raphael, your pupil, your son!"

As though the sound of that voice had penetrated even the sealed consciousness of hopeless idiocy, the aged artist slightly inclined his head, and there was a strange tremulousness in his glance.

"Carl Raphael, your son!" repeated Nameless, and clutched the hands of the artist.

Again that tremulousness in the glance of the artist, and then,—as though a film had fallen from his eyes,—his gaze was firm, and bright, and clear. It was like the restoration of a blind man to sight. His gaze traversed the room, and at length rested on the face of Nameless.

"Carl!" he cried, like one, who, awaking from a troubled dream, finds, unexpectedly, by his bed a familiar and beloved face—"Carl, my son!"

Mary heard that voice; it roused her from her slumber. Starting up, she pressed her father's hands.

"O, Carl, Carl, he knows you! Thank God! thank God!"

"Mary," said the father, gazing upon her earnestly, like one who tries to separate the reality of his waking hours from the images of a past dream.

First upon one face, then upon the other, he turned his gaze, meanwhile, in an absent manner, joining the hand of Mary and the hand of Carl.

"Carl! Mary!" he repeated the names in a low voice, and laid his hands gently on their heads.—"I thought I had lost you, my children. Carl and Mary," he repeated their names again,—"*Carl and Mary!* God bless you, my children; and now——" he surveyed them with his large, bright eyes, "and now I must sleep."

His head fell gently forward on his breast, and he fell asleep to wake no more in this world. His mind had made its last effort in the recognition of Mary and Nameless. For a moment it flashed brightly in its socket, and then went out forever. He was dead. Nay, not dead, but he was,—to use that inexpressibly touching thought, in which the very soul and hope of Christianity is embodied,—"*asleep in Christ.*"

"When Mary raised his head from his breast, his eyes were veiled in the glassy film of death. Leaning upon the arm which never yet failed to support the weary head and the tired heart, gazing upon the face which always looks its ineffable consolation, into the face of the dying, Cornelius had passed away as calmly as a child sinking to sleep upon a mother's faithful breast.

Mary and Nameless, on their knees before the corse, clasped those death-chilled hands, and wept in silence.

And the winter sun, shining bright upon the window-pane, fell upon their bowed heads, and upon the tranquil face of the dead father, around whose lips a smile was playing, as though some word of "good cheer" had been whispered to him, by angel-tongues, in the moment ere he passed away.

And thou art dead, brave artist, and life's battle with thee is over,—the eyes that used to look so manfully upon every phase of sorrow and adversity, are all cold and lusterless now,—the heart that generous emotions filled and lofty conceptions warmed, sleeps pulseless in the lifeless bosom. Thou art dead!—dead in the dreary home of Want, with cold winter light upon thy gray hairs. Dead! Ah, no,—not dead, for there is a PRESENCE in the dismal garret, invisible to external eyes, which puts Death to shame, and upon the gates of the grave writes, in letters of undying light:—*In all the universe of God there is no such thing as death, but simply a transition from one life, or state of life, to another.* Not dead, brave artist. Thou hast not, in a long life, cherished affections, gathered experience from the bitter tree of adversity, and developed, in storm as well as sunshine, thy clear, beautiful intellect, merely to bury them all in the dull grave at last. No,—thou hast borne affections, experience, and intellect, to the genial sunshine of the better land. The coffin-lid of this life has been lifted from thy soul,—thou art risen, indeed,—at last, in truth, THOU LIVEST!

And the PRESENCE which fills thy dark chamber now, although often mocked by the gross interpretations of a brutal theology, often hid from the world by the Gehenna smoke of conflicting creeds, is a living Presence, always living, always loving, always bringing the baptism of consolation to the way-worn children of this life, even as it did in the hour when, embodied in a human form, face to face and eye to eye, it spoke to man.

The sun is high in the wintery heavens, and his light, streaming through the window-pane, falls upon the mattress, whereon, cov-

ered reverently, by the white sheet, the corse is laid. Mary is crouching there, one hand supporting her forehead, the other resting upon the open book, which is placed upon her knee. Thus all day long she watches by the dead. At last the flush of evening is upon the winter sky.

Nameless, standing by the window, tears open the letter of Frank, and reads it by the wintery light. The three hours have passed.

Why does his face change color, as he reads? The look of grief which his countenance wears is succeeded by one of utter horror.

"The poison vial!" he ejaculates, and places the fatal letter in Mary's hand.

CHAPTER VI.

A LOOK INTO THE RED BOOK.

MADAM RESIMER was waiting in the little room up-stairs,—waiting and watching in that most secret chamber of her mansion,—her cheek resting on her hand, her eyes fixed upon the drawer from which the Red Book had been stolen. The day was bright without, but in the closed apartment, the Madam watched by the light of a candle, which was burning fast to the socket. The Madam had not slept. Her eyes were restless and feverish. Her cheeks, instead of their usual florid hues, were marked with alternate spots of white and red. Sitting in the arm-chair, (which her capacious form, clad in the chintz wrapper, filled to overflowing), the Madam beats the carpet nervously with her foot, and then her small black eyes assume a wicked, a vixenish look.

Daylight is bright upon the city and river; ten o'clock is near,—the hour at which Dermoyne intended to return,—and yet the Madam has no word of the bullies whom last night she set upon Dermoyne's track. Near ten o'clock, and no news of Dirk, Slung-Shot, or—the Red Book!

"Why *don't* they come!" exclaimed the Madam, for the fiftieth time, and she beat the carpet wickedly with her foot.

And from the shadows of the apartment, a voice, most lugubrious in its tone, uttered the solitary word,—"*Why?*"

"If they don't come, what shall we do?"

the Madam's eyes grew wickeder, and she began to "crack" the joints of her fingers.

"*What?*" echoed the lugubrious voice.

"I'll tell you what it is, Corkins," said the Madam, turning fiercely in her chair, "I wish the devil had you,—I do! Sittin' there in your chair, croakin' like a raven.—'What! Why!'" and she mimicked him wickedly; "when you should be doin' somethin' to stave off the trouble that's gatherin' round us. Now you know, that unless we get back the Red Book, we're ruined,—you know it?"

"Completely ruined!" echoed Corkins, who sat in the background, on the edge of a chair, his elbows on his knees, and his chin on his hands. Corkins, you will remember, is a little, slender man, clad in black, with a white cravat about his neck, a top-knot on his low forehead, a "goatee" on his chin, and gold spectacles on his nose. And as Corkins sits on the edge of his chair, he looks very much like a strange bird on its perch,—a bird of evil omen, meditating all sorts of calamities sure to happen to quite a number of people, at some time not definitely ascertained.

"It's near ten o'clock," glancing at the gold watch which lay on the table before her, "and no word of Barnhurst, not even a hint of Dirk or Slung! And at ten, that villain who stole the book will come back,—that is, unless Dirk and Slung have taken care of him! I never was in such a fever in all my life! Corkins, what is to be done? And your patient,—how is she?"

"As for the patient up-stairs," Corkins began, but the words died away on his lips.

The sound of a bell rang clearly, although gloomily throughout the mansion.

"Go to the front door,—quick!"—in her impatience the Madam bounded from her chair. "See who's there. Open the door, but don't undo the chain; and don't,—do you hear?—don't let anybody in until you hear from me! Quick, I say!"

"But it isn't the front door bell," hesitated Corkins.

Again the sound of the bell was heard.

"It's the bell of the secret passage," ejaculated Madam, changing color,—"*the* passage which leads to a back street, and of the existence of which, only four persons in the

world know anything. There it goes again ! who can it be ?”

The Madam was evidently very much perplexed. Corkins, who had risen from his perch, stood as though rooted to the floor ; and the bell pealed loud and louder, in dismal echoes throughout the mansion.

“Who can it be ?” again asked the Madam, while a thousand vague suspicions floated through her brain.

“Who can it be ?” echoed Corkins, shaking like a dry leaf in the wind.

Here let us leave them awhile in their perplexity, while we retrace our steps, and take up again the adventures of Barnhurst and Dermoyne. We left them in the dimly-lighted bed-chamber, at the moment when the faithful wife, awaking from her slumber, welcomed the return of her husband in these words,—“Husband ! have you come at last ? I have waited for you so long !”

“Husband !” said the wife, awaking from her sleep, and stretching forth her arms, “have you come at last ? I have waited for you so long !”

“Dearest, I was detained by an unexpected circumstance,” answered Barnhurst, and first turning to Dermoyne with an imploring gesture, he approached the bed, and kissed his wife and sleeping child. Then back to Dermoyne again with a stealthy step,—“Take your revenge !” he whispered ; “advance, and tell everything to my wife.”

Dermoyne's face showed the contest of opposing emotions ; now clouded with a hatred as remorseless as death, now touched with something like pity. At a rapid glance he surveyed the face of the trembling culprit,—the boy sleeping on his couch,—the mother resting on the bed, with her babe upon her bent arm,—and then uttered in a whisper, a single word,—“Come !”

He led Barnhurst over the threshold, out upon the landing, and carefully closed the door of the bed-chamber.

“Now, sir,” he whispered, fixing his stern gaze upon Barnhurst's face, which was lighted by the rays of the lamp in the hall below,—“what have you to propose ?”

Barnhurst's blonde visage was corpse-like in its pallor.

“Nothing,” he said, folding his arms with the air of a man who has lost all hope, and

made up his mind to the worst. “I am in your power.”

Dermoyne, with his finger to his lip, remained for a moment buried in profound thought. Once his eyes, glancing sidelong, rested upon Barnhurst with a sort of ferocious glare. When he spoke again, it was in these words ;—

“Enter your bed-chamber, and sleep beside your faithful wife, and,—think of Alice. As for myself, I will watch for the morning, on the sofa, down stairs. Enter, I say !” he pointed sternly to the door,—“and remember ! at morning we take up our march again. I know that you will not escape from me,—and as for your wife, if you do not wish her to see me, you will make your appearance at an early hour.”

Barnhurst, without a word, glided silently into the bed-chamber, closing the door after him. Dermoyne, listening for a moment, heard the voices of the husband and the wife, mingling in conversation. Then he went quietly down stairs, took down the hanging-lamp, and with it in his hand, entered a room on the lower floor.

It was a neatly-furnished apartment with a sofa, a piano, and a portrait of Barnhurst on the wall. The remains of a wood-fire were smouldering on the hearth. Near the piano stood an empty cradle. It was very much like—home. It was, in a word, the room through whose curtained windows, we gazed in our brief episode, and saw the pure wife with her children, awaiting the return of the husband and father.

Dermoyne lit a candle, which stood on a table, near the sofa, and then replaced the hanging lamp. This done, he came into the quiet parlor again,—without once pausing to notice that the front door was ajar. Had he but remarked this little fact, he might have saved himself a world of trouble. He flung his cloak upon the table, and placed his cap and the iron bar beside it. Then seating himself on the sofa, he drew the Red Book from under his left arm, where for hours he had securely carried it,—and spread it forth upon his knees. Drawing the light nearer to him, he began to examine the contents of that massive volume. How his countenance underwent all changes of expression, as page after page was disclosed to his gaze ! At

first his lip curled, and his brow grew dark,—there was doubtless much to move contempt and hatred in those pages,—but as he read on, his large gray eyes, dilating in their sockets, shone with steady light; every lineament of his countenance, manifested profound, absorbing interest.

The Red Book !

Of all the singular volumes, ever seen, this certainly was one of the most singular. It comprised perchance, one thousand manuscript pages, written by at least a hundred hands. There were original letters, and copies of letters; some of them traced by the tremulous hand of the dying. There were histories and fragments of histories,—the darkest record of the criminal court is not so black, as many a history comprised within the compass of this volume. It contained the history, sometimes complete sometimes in fragmentary shape, of all who had ever sought the aid of Madam Resimer, or,—suffered beneath her hands. And there were letters there, and histories there, which the Madam had evidently gathered, with a view of extorting money from certain persons, who had never passed into the circle of her infernal influence. All the crimes that can spring from unholy marriages, from violation of the marriage vow, from the seduction of innocent maidenhood, from the conflict between poor chastity and rich temptation, stood out upon those pages, in forms of terrible life. That book was a revelation of the civilization of a large city,—a glittering mask with a death's head behind it,—a living body chained to a leperous corpse. Instead of being called the Red Book, it should have been called the Black Book, or the Death Book, or the Mysteries of the Social World.

How the aristocracy of the money power was set forth in those pages ! That aristocracy which the French know as the "*Bourgeoisie*," which the English style the "*Middle Classes*," and which the Devil knows for his "*own*,"—the name of whose god the Savior pronounced, when he uttered the word "*Mammon*,"—whose loftiest aspiration is embodied in the word "*Respectable* !" How this modern aristocracy of the money power, stood out in naked life, showy and mean, glittering and heartless, upon the

pages of the Red Book ! Stood out in colors, painted, not by an enemy, but by its own hand, the mark of its baseness stamped upon its forehead, by its own peculiar seal.

One history was there, which, written in different hands, in an especial manner, riveted the interest of Arthur Dermoyne. Bending forward, with the light of the candle upon his brow, he read it page by page, his face manifesting every contrast of emotion as he read. For a title it bore a single name, written in a delicate womanly hand,—"*MARION MERLIN*." The greater portion of the history was written in the same hand.

Leaning upon the shoulder of Arthur Dermoyne, let us, with him, read this sad, dark history.

CHAPTER VII.

MARION MERLIN.

At the age of eighteen I was betrothed to Walter Howard, a young man of polished manners, elegant exterior, and connected with one of the first families of New York. I was beautiful, so the world said,—eighteen and an heiress. My father was one of the wealthiest merchants of New York, with a princely mansion in town, and as princely a mansion, for summer residence, in the country. I had lost my mother, at an age so early, that I can but dimly remember her pallid face. At eighteen, I was my father's only and idolized child.

Returning from boarding-school, where, apart from the busy world, I had passed four years of a life, which afterward was to be marked by deeds so singular, yes, unnatural, I was invested by my father, with the keys of his city mansion, and installed as its mistress. Still kept apart from the world,—for my father guarded me from its wiles and temptations, with an eye of sleepless jealousy,—I was left to form ideas of my future life, from the fancies of my day-dreams, or from what knowledge I had gleaned from books. Walter was my father's head clerk. In that capacity he often visited our mansion. To see him was to love him. His form was graceful, and yet manly; his complexion a rich bronze; his eyes dark, penetrating and melancholy. As

for myself, a picture which, amid all my changing fortunes, I have preserved as a relic of happy and innocent days, shows a girl of eighteen, with a form that may well be called voluptuous, and a face, (shaded by masses of raven hair,) which, with its clear bronzed complexion, large hazel eyes, and arching brows, tells the story of my descent on my mother's side,—she was a West-Indian, and there is Spanish blood in my veins. My acquaintance with Walter, ripened into warm and passionate love, and one day, my father surprised me, as I hung upon my lover's breast, and instead of chiding us, said with a look of unmistakable affection :

"Right, Walter. You have won my daughter's love. When you return from the West Indies, you shall be married; and once married, instead of my head clerk, you shall be my partner."

My father was a venerable man, with a kindly face and snow-white hair: as he spoke the tears ran down his cheeks, for (as I afterward ascertained,) my marriage with Walter, the orphan of one of the dearest friends of his boyhood, had been the most treasured hope of his life for years.

Walter left for Havanna, intrusted with an important and secret commission from my father. He was to be absent only a month. Why was it, on the day of his departure, as he strained me to his breast and covered my face with his passionate kisses, that a deep presentiment chilled my blood? O had he never left my side, what a world of agony, of despair,—yes of crime,—would have been spared to me!

"Be true to me, Marion!" these were his last words,—“in a month I will return—”

"True to you! can you doubt it Walter? True until death,—” and we parted.

I was once more alone, in my father's splendid mansion. One evening he came home, but not with his usual kindly smile. He was pale and troubled, and seemed to avoid my gaze. Without entering the sitting-room, he went at once to his library, and locked himself in, having first directed the servant to call him, in case a Mr. Issachar Burley inquired for him. It was after eight when Mr. Burley called, and was shown into the parlor, while the servant went to announce him to my father.

"Miss Marion, I believe!" he said, as he beheld me by the light of the astral-lamp,—and then a singular look passed over his face; a look which at that time I could not define, but which afterward was made terribly clear to me. This Mr. Burley, who thus for the first time entered my father's house, was by no means prepossessing in his exterior. Over fifty years of age, corpulent in form, bald-headed, his florid face bore the undeniable traces of a life, exhausted in sensual indulgences.

While I was taking a survey of this singular visitor, the servant entered the parlor,—

"Mr. Burley will please walk up into the library," he said.

"Good night, dear," said Mr. Burley with a bow, and a gesture that had as much of insolence as of politeness in it,—“By-by,—we'll meet again."

He went up stairs, and my father and he, were closeted together for at least two hours. At ten o'clock I was sent for. I entered the library, trembling, I know not why; and found my father and Mr. Burley, seated on opposite sides of a table overspread with papers,—a hanging lamp, suspended over the table, gave light to the scene. My father was deadly pale.

"Sit down, Marion," he said, in a voice so broken and changed, that I would not have recognized it, had I not seen his face,—“Mr. Burley has something to say to you."

"Mr. Burley!" I ejaculated,—“What can he have to say to me?"

"Speak to her,—speak," said my father,—“speak, for I cannot,—” and resting his hands on the table, his head dropped on his breast.

"Sit down, my dear," exclaimed Burley, in a tone of easy familiarity,—“I have a little matter of business with your father. There's no use of mincing words. Your father, my dear, is a ruined man."

I sank into a chair, and my father's groan confirmed Burley's words.

"Hopelessly involved," continued Mr. Burley,—“Unless he can raise three hundred thousand dollars by to-morrow noon, he is a *dishonored* man. Do you hear me, my dear? Dishonored!"

"Dishonored!" groaned my father burying his head in his hands.

"And more than this," continued Burley, "Your father, among his many mercantile speculations, has dabbled a little,—yes more than a little,—in the African slave-trade. He has relations with certain gentlemen at Havanna, which once known to our government, would consign him to the convict's cell."

The words of the man filled me with indignation, and with horror. Half fainting as I was, I felt the blood boil in my veins.

"Father, rebuke the liar,"—I said as I placed my hand on his shoulder.—"Raise your face, and tell him that he is the coiner of a falsehood, as atrocious as it is foolish—"

My father did not reply.

"And more than this,"—Burley went on, as though he had not heard me,—"I have it in my power, either to relieve your father from his financial embarrassments, or,—" he paused and surveyed me from head to foot,—"or to denounce him to the government as one guilty, of something which it calls *piracy*,—to wit, an intimate relationship with the African slave trade."

Again my father groaned, but did not raise his face.

The full truth burst upon me. My father was ruined, and in this man's power. Confused,—half maddened, I flung myself upon my knees, and clasped Burley by the hands.

"O, you will not ruin my father," I shrieked.—"You will save him."

Burley took my hands within his own, and bent down, until I felt his breath upon my cheeks—

"Yes, I will save him," he whispered,—
"That is, for a price,—your hand, my dear."

His look could not be mistaken. At the same moment, my father raised his face from his hands,—it was pallid, distorted, stamped with despair.

"It is the only way, Marion," he said in a broken voice,—
"Otherwise your father must rot in a felon's cell."

Amid all the misfortunes of a varied and changeful life, the agony of that moment has never once been forgotten. I felt the blood rush to my head—

"Be it so," I cried,—and fell like a dead woman on the floor, at the feet of Mr. Issachar Burley.

CHAPTER VIII.

NIAGARA.

THE next day we were married. In the dusk of the evening four figures stood in the spacious parlor of my father's mansion, by the light of a single waxen-candle. There was the clergyman, gazing in dumb surprise upon the parties to this ill-assorted marriage, there was my father, his countenance vacant almost to imbecility,—for the blow had stricken his intellect—there was the bridegroom, his countenance glowing with sensual triumph; and there the bride, pale as the bridal-dress which enveloped her form, about to be sacrificed on the altar of an unholy marriage. We were married, and between the parlor and the bridal chamber, one hope remained. Rather than submit to the embrace of the unworthy sensualist, I had determined to die, even upon the threshold of the bridal chamber. I had provided myself with a poniard. But alas! a glass of wine, drugged by my husband's hand, benumbed my reason, and when morning light broke upon me again, I found myself in his arms.

The history of the next three months may be rapidly told, for they were months of agony and shame,

"I have directed Walter by letter, to proceed from Havanna to the city of Mexico," said my father to me, the second day after the marriage—"He will not return for six months, and certainly until his return, shall not hear of this,—this,—marriage."

My father's mind was broken, and from that hour, he surrendered himself to Issachar's control. Burley took charge of his business, made our house his home,—he was my father's master and mine. The course which he pursued to blunt my feelings, and deaden every faculty of my better nature, by rousing all that was sensual within me, was worthy of him. He gave parties at our home, to the profligate of both sexes, selected from a certain class of the so-called "fashionables," of New York. Revels, prolonged from midnight until dawn, disturbed the quiet of our mansion; and in the wine-cup, and amid the excitement of those fashionable, but unholy orgies, I soon learned to forget the pure hopes of my maidenhood.

Three months passed, and no word of Walter; my father, meanwhile, was sinking deeper every day into hopeless imbecility. At length, the early part of summer, my husband gathered together a party of his fashionable friends, and we departed on a tour to Niagara Falls, up the lakes, and then along the St. Lawrence, and to Montreal. At Niagara Falls we put up at the —— Hotel, and the orgies which had disgraced my father's mansion, were again resumed. My father we had left at home, in charge of a well-trying and faithful servant. One summer evening, tired of the scenes which took place in our parlors, at the hotel, I put on a bonnet and veil, and alone pursued my way, across the bridge to Iris Island, and from Iris to Luna Island. The night was beautiful; from a clear sky the moon shone over the falls; and the roar of waters, alone disturbed the silence of the scene. Crossing the narrow bridge which separates Iris Island from Luna Island, I took my way through the deep shadows of the thicket, until I emerged in the moonlight, upon the verge of the falls. Leaning against a small beech tree, which stands there, I clasped my hands upon my bosom, and wept. That scene, full of the grandeur and purity of nature, awoke the memory of my pure and happier days.

"One plunge and all is over!" the thought flashed over me,—and I measured with a rapid glance, the distance between myself and the brink of the cataract. But at this moment I discovered that I was not alone upon Luna Island. A stranger was leaning against a tree, which was nearer to the brink of the falls than the one against which I leaned. His face was in profile, the lower part of it covered with a thick moustache and beard; and his gaze was lifted absently to the moonlight sky. As I dropped my veil over my face, and gazed at him freely, myself unperceived, I felt my limbs bend beneath me, and the blood rush in a torrent to my head.

I had only strength to frame one word—"Walter!" and fell fainting on his breast.

When I recovered my consciousness, I found myself resting in his arms, while he covered my face with burning kisses.

"You here, Marion!" he cried. "This is indeed an unexpected pleasure!"

He had not heard of my marriage!

"I am here, with some friends," I faltered. "My father could not come with me—and—"

Between the kisses which he planted upon the lips of his betrothed—(so he thought)—he explained his unexpected appearance at Niagara. At Havanna he had received the letter from my father, desiring him to hasten, on important business, to the city of Mexico. He had obeyed, and accomplished his mission sooner than he anticipated; had left Vera Cruz for New Orleans; taken steamboat for Cincinnati, and from thence to Cleveland, and across the lake to Buffalo and Niagara Falls.

"And now I'm on my way home, Marion," he concluded. "What a pleasant surprise it will be for father!"

"I am married, Walter."—The words were on my lips, but I could not speak them.

We rose, and, arm in arm, wandered over the bridge, up the steep, and through the winding walks of Goat Island. Leaning on the arm of Walter, I forgot everything but that he loved me and that he was with me. I did not dare to think that to-morrow's light would disclose to him the truth—that I was married, and to another. At length, as we approached the bridge which leads from the Island to the shore, I said—"Leave me Walter; we must not be seen to return together. To-morrow you can call upon me, when I am in presence of my—friends."

One passionate embrace was exchanged, and I watched him, as he crossed the bridge alone, until he was out of sight. Why, I knew not, but an impulse for which I could not account, induced me to retrace my steps to Luna Island. In a few moments I had crossed the bridge (connecting Iris with Luna Island,) and stood once more on the Cataract's brink, under the same tree where an hour before I had discovered Walter. Oh, the agony of that moment, as, gazing over the falls, I called up my whole life, my blighted prospect, and my future without one ray of hope! Should I advance, but a single step, and bury my shame and my sorrows beneath the cataract? Once dead, Walter would at least respect my memory, while living he could only despise and abhor me.

While thoughts like these flashed over my

brain, my ear was saluted with the chorus of a drinking song, hummed in an uneven and tremulous voice; and, in a moment my husband passed before me, with an unsteady step. He was confused and excited by the fumes of champagne. Approaching the verge of the island—but a few feet from the verge of the cataract—where the waters look smooth and glassy, as they are about to take the last plunge, he stood gazing, now at the torrent, now at the moon, with a vague, half-drunken stare.

That moment decided my life!

His attitude, the cataract so near, my own lost and hopeless condition, all rushed upon me. Vailing my face, I darted forward and uttered a shriek. Startled by the unexpected sound, he turned, lost his balance, and fell backward into the torrent. But, as he fell, he clutched a branch which overhung the water. Thus, scarcely two yards from the brink, he struggled madly for his life, his face upturned to the moon. I advanced and uncovered my face. He knew me, for the shock had sobered him.

"Marion, save me, save me!" he cried.

I gazed upon him without a word, my arms folded on my breast, and saw him struggle, and heard the branch snap, and—heard his death-howl, as he was swept over the falls. Then, pale as death, and shuddering as with mortal cold, I dragged my steps from the island, over the bridge—shrieking madly for help. Soon, I heard footsteps and voices. "Help! help!" I shrieked, as I was surrounded by a group of faces, men and women. "My husband! my husband! the falls!" and sank, fainting, in their midst.

CHAPTER IX.

A SECOND MARRIAGE.

MORNING came, and no suspicion attached to me. A murderess—if not in deed, in thought, certainly—I was looked upon as the inconsolable widow. Walter left Niagara without seeing me. How did he regard me? I could not tell. The death of Burley broke up our traveling party, and we returned to New York. I returned in time to attend my father's funeral; and found myself the heiress, in my own right, of three hundred thousand dollars. An heiress and a widow,

certainly life began to brighten! Burley removed, the incubus which sat upon my father's wealth was gone; and I was beautiful, and free, and rich—immensely rich.

But where was Walter? Montha passed, and I did not see him. As he was the head clerk of my father, I hoped to see him, in company with legal gentlemen, engaged to close up my father's estate. But he settled his accounts, closed all connection with my father's estate and business, but did not come near me. At length, weary of suspense, and heart-sick of the loneliness of my desolate mansion, I wrote to him, begging an interview.

He called in the dusk of the evening, when a single candle lighted up the spacious and gloomy parlor. He was dressed in deep mourning, and very pale.

"Madam, you wished to see me," he began.

This cold and formal manner cut me to the heart.

"Walter!" I cried, and flung myself upon his breast, and passionately, but in broken accents, told him how my father's anticipated ruin had forced me to marry Burley.

Walter was melted. "Marion, I love you, and always shall love you, but—but—"

He paused. In an agony of suspense I hung upon his words.

"But—"

"But you are so rich, and I—I—I—am poor!"

I drowned all further words with kisses, and in a moment we were betrothed again.

We were married. Walter was the master of my fortune, my person and my future. We lived happily together, content with each other's society, and seeking, in the endearments of a pure marriage, to blot out the memory of an unholy one. My husband, truly my husband, was all that I could desire; and by me, he became the possessor of a princely revenue, free to gratify his taste for all that is beautiful in the arts, in painting and sculpture, without hinderance or control. Devoted to me, always kind, eager to gratify my slightest wish, Walter was all that I could desire. We lived to ourselves, and forgot the miserable mockery called "the fashionable world," into which Burley had introduced me. Thus a year passed away,

and present happiness banished the memory of a gloomy past. After a year, Walter began to have important engagements, on pressing business, in Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore and Washington. His absence was death to me; but, having full confidence in him, and aware that his business must be of vital importance, or assuredly he would not leave me, I saw him depart, time and again, with grief too deep for words, and always hailed his return—the very echo of his step with a joy as deep. On one occasion, when he left me, for a day, on a business visit to Philadelphia, I determined—I scarcely knew why—to follow him, and greet him, on his arrival in Philadelphia, with the unexpected but welcome surprise of my presence. Clothing myself in black—black velvet bonnet, and black velvet mantilla, and with a dark veil over my face—I followed him to the ferry-boat, crossed to Jersey City, and took my seat near him in the cars. We arrived in Philadelphia late at night. To my surprise he did not put up at one of the prominent hotels, but bent his way to an obscure and distant part of the city. I followed him to a remote part of Kensington, and saw him knock at the door of an isolated two-story house. After a pause, it was opened, and he entered. I waited from the hour of twelve until three, but he did not re-appear. Sadly and with heavy steps I bent my way to the city, and took lodgings at a respectable but third-rate tavern, representing myself as a widow from the interior, and taking great care to conceal my face from the gaze of the landlord and servants. Next morning it was my first care to procure a male dress,—it matters not how, or with what caution and trouble,—and, tying it up in a compact bundle, I made my way to the open country and entered a wood. It was the first of autumn, and already the leaves were tinted with rainbow dyes. In the thickest part of the wood I disposed of my female attire, and assumed the male dress—blue frock, buttoned to the throat, dark pantaloons, and gaiter boots. My dark hair I arranged beneath a glazed cap with military buttons. Cutting a switch I twirled it jauntily in my hand, and, anxious to test my disguise, entered a wayside cottage—near the Second Street Road—and asked for a glass of water. While the

back of the tenant of the cottage—an aged woman—was turned, I gazed in the looking-glass, and beheld myself, to all appearance, a young man of medium stature, with brown complexion of exceeding richness, lips of cherry red, arched brows, eyes of unusual brilliancy, and black hair, arranged in a glossy mass beneath a glazed cap. It was the image of a handsome boy of nineteen, with no down on the lip and no beard on the chin. Satisfied with my disguise, and with a half-formed idea floating through my brain, I bent my steps to the isolated house, which I had seen my husband enter the night before. I knocked; the door was opened by a young girl, plainly clad, but of surpassing beauty—evidently not more than sixteen years old. A sunny complexion, blue eyes, masses of glossy brown hair, combined with an expression which mingled voluptuous warmth with stainless innocence. Such was her face. As to her form, although not so tall as mine, it mingled the graceful outlines of the maiden with the ripeness of the woman.

CHAPTER X.

A SECOND MURDER.

SHE gazed upon me with surprise. Obeying a sudden impulse, I said—"Excuse me, Miss, but I promised to meet *him* here. You know," with a polite bow and smile, "you know whom I mean?"

"Mr. Barton—" she hesitated.

"Exactly so; Mr. Barton, my intimate friend, who has confided *all* to me, and who desired me to meet him here at this hour."

"My mother is not at home," hesitated the young girl, "and, in her absence, I do not like to—"

"Receive strangers, you were about to add? Well, Miss, I am not a stranger. As the intimate friend of Mr. Barton, who especially desired me to meet him here—"

These words seemed to resolve all her doubts. She motioned me to enter, and we passed into a small room, neatly furnished, with the light which came through the curtained windows, shining upon a picture,—the portrait of Walter Howard, my husband.

"Capital likeness of Barton," I said, carelessly tapping my switch against my boot.

"Yes,—yes," she replied as she took a seat at the opposite end of the sofa,—“but not so handsome.”

In the course of two hours, in which with a maddened pulse and heaving breast, I waited for the appearance of my husband, I learned from the young girl the following facts:—She was a poor girl, and her mother, with whom she lived, a widow in very moderate circumstances. Her name was Ada Bulmer. Mr. Lawrence Barton (this, of course, was the assumed name of my husband,) was a wealthy gentleman of a noble heart,—he had saved her life in a railroad accident, some months before. He had been unhappy, however, in marriage; was now divorced from a wicked and unfaithful woman; and,—here was the climax,—“and next week we are to be married, and mother, Lawrence, and myself will proceed to Europe directly after our marriage.”

This was Ada's story, which I heard with emotions that can scarcely be imagined. Every word planted a hell in my heart. At length, toward nightfall, a knock was heard, and Ada hastened to the door. Presently I heard my husband's step in the entry, and then his voice,—

“Dearest,——” there was the sound of a kiss,—“I have got rid of that infamous woman, who killed her first husband, and have turned all my property into ready money. On Monday we start for Europe.”

He entered, and as he entered I glided behind the door. Thus his back was toward me, while his face was toward Ada, and his arms about her waist.

“On Monday, dearest, we will be married, and then——”

I was white with rage, but calm as death. Drawing the poniard, (which I had never parted with since I first procured it,) I advanced and struck him, once, twice, thrice, in the back. He never beheld me, but fell upon Ada's breast, bathed in blood. She uttered a shriek, but laying my hand upon her shoulder, I said, sternly,—

“Not a word! this villain seduced *my only sister*, as he would have seduced you!”

I tore him from her arms, and laid him on the sofa; he was speechless; the blood flowed from his mouth and nostrils, but by his

glance, I saw that he knew me. Ada, white as a shroud, tottered toward him.

“Seducer of my sister, have we met at last?” I said aloud,—and then bending my face to his, and my bosom close to his breast, I whispered,—

“The *wicked woman* who killed her first husband, gives you this,”—and in my rage buried the poniard in his heart.

Ada fell fainting to the floor, and I hurried from the house. It was a dark night, enlivened only by the rays of the stars, but I gained the wood, washed the blood from my hands, and resumed my female attire. In less than an hour, I reached the depot at Kensington, entered the cars, and before twelve, crossed the threshold of my own home in New York.

How I passed the night,—with what emotions of agony, remorse, jealousy,—matters not. And for three days afterward, as I awaited for the developments, I was many times near raving madness. The account of my husband's death filled the papers; and it was supposed that he had been killed by some unknown man, in revenge, for the seduction of a sister. My wild demeanor was attributed to natural grief at his untimely end.

On the fourth day I had his body brought on from Philadelphia; and on the fifth, celebrated his funeral, following his corpse to the family vault, draped in widow's weeds, and blinded with tears of grief, or of—despair. Ada Bulmer I never saw again, but believe she died within a year of consumption or a broken heart.

CHAPTER XI.

MARION AND HERMAN BARNHURST.

ALONE in my mansion, secluded from the world, I passed many months in harrowing meditations on the past. Oftentimes I saw the face of Walter dabbled in blood, and both awake and in my dreams, I saw, O, how vividly his *last look*! I was still rich, (although Walter, as I discovered, after his death, had recklessly squandered more than one-half of my fortune,) but what mattered riches to one devoured like myself by an ever-gnawing remorse? What might I have been had not Burley forced me into that

unholy marriage? This question was never out of my mind for a long year, during which I wore the weeds of widowhood, and kept almost entirely within the limits of my mansion.

Toward the close of the year an incident occurred which had an important bearing on my fate. Near my home stood a church, in which a young and eloquent preacher held forth to the admiration of a fashionable congregation, every Sabbath-day. On one occasion I occupied a seat near the pulpit, and was much struck by his youthful appearance, combined with eloquence so touching and enthusiastic. His eagle eye, shone from his pallid face, with all the fire of an earnest, a heartfelt sincerity. I was struck by the entire manner of the man, and more than once in his sermon he seemed to address me in especial, for our eyes met, as though there was a mutual magnetism in our gaze. When I returned home I could not banish his face nor his accents from my memory; I felt myself devoured by opposing emotions; remorse for the past, mingled with a sensation of interest in the youthful preacher. At length, after much thought, I sent him this note by the hands of a servant in livery:—

REVEREND SIR,—

A lady who heard your eloquent sermon on "*Conscience*," on Sabbath last, desires to ask your advice in a matter touching the peace of her soul. She resides at No. —, and will be glad to receive you to-morrow evening.

M. H.

This singular note was dispatched, and the servant directed to inform the Rev. Herman Barnhurst of my full name. As the appointed hour drew nigh, I felt nervous and restless. Will he come? Shall I unbosom myself to him, and obtain at least a portion of mental peace by confessing the deeds and thoughts which rest so heavy on my soul? At last dusk came; two candles stood lighted on the mantle of the front parlor, and seated on the sofa I nervously awaited the coming of the preacher.

"I will confess all!" I thought, and raising my eyes, surveyed myself in the mirror which hung opposite. The past year, with all its sorrow, had rather added to, than detracted from, my personal appearance. My

form was more matured and womanly. And the sorrow which I had endured had given a grave earnestness to my look, which, in the eyes of some, would have been more winning than the glance of voluptuous languor. Dressed in deep black, my bust covered to the throat, and my hair gathered plainly aside from my face, I looked the grave, serious—and, I may add, without vanity—the beautiful widow. The Rev. Herman Barnhurst was announced at last,—how I trembled as I heard his step in the hall! He entered, and greeting him with an extended hand, I thanked him warmly for calling in answer to my informal note, and motioned him to a chair. There was surprise and constraint in his manner, but he never once took his eyes from my face. He stammered and even blushed as he spoke to me.

"You spoke, madam, of a case of conscience," he began.

"A case of conscience about which I wished to speak to you."

"Surely," he said, fixing his gaze earnestly upon me, and his words seemed to be forced from him, even against his will,—"*surely* one so beautiful and so good cannot have anything like sin upon her soul——"

Our gaze met, and from that moment we talked of everything but the case of conscience. All his restraint vanished. His eye flashed, his voice rolled deep and full; he was eloquent, and he was at home. We seemed to have been acquainted for years. We talked of history, poetry, the beautiful in nature, the wonderful in art; and we talked without effort, as though our minds mingled together, without even the aid of voice and eyes. Time sped noiselessly,—it was twelve o'clock before we thought it nine. He rose to go.

"I shall do myself the pleasure to call again," he said, and his voice faltered.

I extended my hand; his hand met it in a gentle pressure. That touch decided our fate. As though my very being and his had rushed together and melted into one, in that slight pressure of hand to hand, we stood silent and confused,—one feeling in our gaze,—blushing and pale by turns.

"Woman," he said, in a voice scarcely above a whisper, "you will drive me mad," and sank half-fainting on his knees.

I bent down and drew him to my breast, and covered his forehead with kisses. Pale, half-fainting, he lay almost helpless in my arms.

"Not mad, Herman," I whispered, "but I will be your good angel; I will cheer you in your mission of good. I will watch over you as you ascend, step by step, the difficult steep of fame; and Herman, I will love you."

It was the first time that young brow had trembled to a woman's kiss.

"Nay,—nay,—tempt me not," he murmured, and unwound my arms from his neck, and staggered to the door.

But as he reached the threshold, he turned,—our gaze met,—he rushed forward with outspread arms,—

"I love you!" he cried, and his face was buried on my bosom.

* * * * *

From that hour the Rev. Herman Barnhurst was the constant visitor at my house. He lived in my presence. His sermons, formerly lofty and somber in their enthusiasm, became colored with a passionate warmth. I felt a strange interest in the beautiful boy; a feeling compounded of pure love; of passion; of voluptuousness, the most intense and refined.

"O, Marion, do you not think that if I act aright in all other respects, that this *one sin* will be forgiven me?" said Herman, as one Sabbath evening, after the service was over, we sat, side by side, in my house. It was in a quiet room, the curtains drawn, a light shining in front of a mirror, and a couch dimly seen through the shadows of an alcove.

"One sin? what mean you, Herman?"

"The sin of loving you,"—and he blushed as his earnest gaze met mine.

"And is it a sin to love me?" I answered in a low voice, suffering my hand to rest upon his forehead.

"Yes," he stammered,— "to love you thus unlawfully."

"Why unlawfully?"

He buried his head on my breast, as he replied,— "I love you as a husband, and I am not your husband."

"And why—" I exclaimed, seizing him in my arms, and gently raising his head, so

that our gaze met,— "and why can you not be my husband? I am rich; you have genius. My wealth,—enough for us both,—shall be linked with your genius, and both shall the more firmly cement our love. Say, Herman, why can you not be my husband?"

He turned pale, and avoided my gaze.

"You are ashamed of me,—ashamed, because I have given you the last proof which a woman can give to the man she loves."

"Ashamed! O, no, no,—by all that is sacred, no,—but Marion——"

And bending nearer to me, in faltering accents, he whispered the secret to my ears. He was betrothed to Fanny Lansdale, the daughter of the wealthiest and most influential member of his congregation. He had been betrothed long before he met me. To Mr. Lansdale, the father, he owed all that he had acquired in life, both in position and fame. That gentleman had taken him when a friendless orphan boy, had educated him, and after his ordination, had obtained for him the pastoral charge of his large and wealthy congregation. Thus, he was bound to the father by every tie of gratitude; to the daughter by an engagement that he could not break, without ingratitude and disgrace. My heart died within me at this revelation. At once I saw that Herman could never be lawfully mine. Between him and myself stood Fanny Lansdale, and every tie of gratitude, and every emotion of self-respect and honor.

CHAPTER XII.

MARION AND FANNY.

NOT long after this interview, I saw Fanny Lansdale at church; made the acquaintance of her father—a grave citizen, who regarded me as a sincere devotee—and induced Fanny to become a frequent visitor at my house. She confided all to me. She loved Herman devotedly, and looked forward to their marriage as the most certain event in the world. She was a very pretty child, with clear blue eyes, luxuriant hair, and a look of bewitching archness. I do not step aside from the truth, when I state that I sincerely loved her; although it is also true, that I never

suffered myself to think of her marriage with Herman as anything but an impossible dream. An incident took place one summer evening, about a year after Herman's first visit to my house, which, slight as it was, it is just as well to relate. It is such slight incidents which often decide the fate of a lifetime, and strike down the barrier between innocence and crime.

I was sitting on the sofa at the back window of the parlor, and Fanny sat on the stool at my feet. The light of the setting sun shone over my shoulders, and lighted up her face, as her clasped hands rested on my knees, and her happy, guileless look, was centered on my countenance. As I gazed upon that innocent face, full of youth and hope, I was reminded of my own early days; and at the memory, a tear rolled down my cheek.

"Yes, you shall marry Herman," the thought flashed over my mind; "and I will aid you, Fanny; yes, I will resign Herman to you."

At this moment Herman entered noiselessly, and took his place by my shoulder; and, without a word, gazed first into my face and then into the face of Fanny. Oh, that look! It was never forgotten. It was fate. For it said, as plainly as a soul, speaking through eyes, can say—"Thou, Marion, art my mistress, the companion of my illicit and sensual love; but thou, Fanny, art my wife, the pure partner of my lawful love!"

After that look, Herman bade us good evening! in a tone of evident agitation, and hurried from the room.

From that hour, Herman avoided me. Weeks passed, and he was not seen at my house. At church he never seemed to be conscious of my presence; and, the service over, hurried at once from the place, without a single glance or sign of recognition. At length, Fanny's visits became less frequent; and, when she did come to see me, her manner manifested a conflict of confidence and suspicion. That this wounded me—that the absence of Herman cut me to the soul—may easily be imagined. I passed my time between alternations of hope and despair; now listening, and in vain, for the echo of Herman's step—and now bathed in unavailing tears. Conscious that my passion

for Herman was the last link that bound me to purity—to life itself—I did not give up the hope of seeing him at my feet, as in former days, until months had elapsed. Finally, grown desperate, and anxious to avoid the sting of wounded love, the perpetual presence of harrowing memories, I sought the society of that class of fashionables, to whom my first husband, Issachar Burley, had introduced me. I kept open house for them. Revels, from midnight until dawn, in which men and women of the first class mingled, served for a time to banish reflection, and sap, tie by tie, every thread of hope which held me to a purer state of life. The kennel has its orgies, and the hovel, in which ignorance and squalor join in their uncouth debauch; but the orgie of the parlor, in which beauty, intellect, fashion and refinement are mingled, far surpasses, in unutterable vulgarity, the lowest orgie of the kennel. Amid the uproar of scenes like these, news reached me that the Rev. Herman Barnhurst and Miss Fanny Lansdale were shortly to be united in marriage.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN UNUTTERABLE CRIME.

ONE evening I was sitting alone, in the back parlor, near a table on which stood a lighted candle and a wine-glass, (for I now at times began to seek oblivion in wine,) when Gerald Dudley was announced. Gerald was one of my fashionable friends, over forty in years, tall in stature, with a florid face, short curling brown hair, and sandy whiskers. He was a *roue*, and a gambler, and—save the mark—one of the first fashionables of New York. He entered, dressed in a showy style; blue coat, red velvet vest, plaid pants, brimstone-colored gloves, and a profusion of rings and other jewelry—a style indicative of the man. Seating himself on the sofa, he began chatting in his easy way about passing events of fashionable life, and of the world at large.

"By-the-bye, the popular preacher, young Barnhurst, is to be married; and to such a love of a girl—daughter of old Lansdale, the *millionaire*. Lucky fellow! Do you know that I've often noticed her at church—a perfect *Hebe*—and followed her home, once or twice,

and that I shouldn't mind marrying her myself if I could get a chance!"

And he laughed a laugh which showed his white teeth. "Bah! But that's it—I can't get a chance."

Perhaps I blushed at the mention of this marriage; but he immediately continued:—

"*On dit*, my pretty widow, that this girl, Lansdale, has cut you out. Barnhurst once was sadly taken with you; so I've heard. How is it? All talk, I suppose?"

I felt myself growing pale, although the blood was boiling in my veins. But before I could reply, there was a ring at the front door, followed by the sound of a hasty foot-step, and the next moment, to my utter surprise, Fanny Lansdale rushed into the room. Without seeming to notice the presence of Dudley, she rushed forward, and fell on her knees before me, her bonnet hanging on her neck, her hair floating about her face, and that face bathed in blushes and tears.

"Oh, Marion! Marion!" she gasped,—
"some slanderer has told father a story about you and Herman,—a vile, wicked story,—which you can refute, and which I am sure you will! For—for—"

She fell fainting on my knee. The violence of her emotions, for the time, deprived her of all appearance of life. Her head was on my lap; one hand sought mine, and was joined to it in a convulsive clasp.

Oh, who shall say that those crimes which make the world shudder but to hear told, are the result of long and skillful planning, of careful and intricate scheming? No, no; the worst crimes—those which it would seem might make even the heart of a devil, contract with horror—are not the result of long and deliberate purpose, but of the temptation of a moment—of the fatal opportunity!

As her head rested on my lap, a voice whispered in my ear:

"Your rival! Retire for a few moments, in search of hartshorn, or some such restorative, and leave the fainting one in my care."

I raised my head and caught the eye of Gerald Dudley. Only a single look, and the fiend was in my heart. I rose; the fainting girl fell upon the floor; I hurried from the room, and did not pause until I had reached my own chamber, and locked the door.

Pressing my hands now on my burning temples, now on my breast, I paced the floor; while, perchance, fifteen minutes—they seemed an eternity—passed away.

Then I went slowly down stairs, and entered the back parlor. Gerald was there, standing near the sofa; his face wearing an insolent scowl of triumph. The girl was stretched upon the sofa, still insensible, but—I dare not write it—opposite Gerald stood Herman Barnhurst, who had followed Fanny to the house, and arrived—too late. His face was bloodless.

"Oh, villain!" he groaned, as his maddened gaze was fixed on Dudley; "you shall pay for this with your blood—"

"Softly, Reverend Sir! softly! One word of this, and the world shall know of your amours with the handsome widow."

Herman's gaze rested on my face—

"You,—know—of—this?" he began, with a look that can never be forgotten.

"Pardon, Herman, pardon! I was mad," I shrieked, flinging myself at his feet, and clutching his knees.

For a moment he gazed upon me, and then, lifting his clenched right hand, he struck me on the forehead, and I fell insensible on the floor. The curse, which he spoke as I fell, rings even yet in my ears.

CHAPTER XIV.

SUICIDE.

THREE days have passed since then. Such days as I will never pass again! I have just learned that Gerald Dudley has fled the city. His purpose to obtain Fanny's hand in marriage by first accomplishing her shame, has utterly failed. Her father knows all, and is now using every engine of his wealth to connect my name with the crime which has damned every hope of his idolized child. And he will succeed! I feel it; I know it; my presentiment cannot prove false. What shall I do?—whither turn?

And Herman is a raving lunatic. This too is my work. Yes, yes, I am resolved.—I am resolved. * * * *

To-morrow's dawn will bring disgrace and shame to me; and, in the future, I see the crowded court-house—the mob, eager to drink in the story of my guilt,—and the

felon's cell. But the morrow's dawn I shall never see!

I am alone in my chamber—the very chamber in which I became Burley's, in an unholy marriage—Walter's, in the marriage of a stainless love—Herman's, in the mad embrace of passion. And now, O Death! upon that marriage couch, I am about to wed thee!

The brazier stands in the center of the bridal chamber; its contents were ignited half an hour ago; every avenue to my chamber is carefully closed; already the fumes of the burning charcoal begin to smite my temples and my heart.

This record, written from time to time, and now concluded by a hand chilled by death, I leave to my only living relative,—not as an apology for my crimes, but as an explanation of the causes which led me to the brink of this awful abyss.

Air! air! Burley, for thee I have no remorse. Let the branch snap!—over the cataract with thy accursed face! Thou wert the cause of all—thou! But, Walter, thy last look kills my soul.—Herman, thy curse is on me! And poor Fanny! Air! Light! It is so dark—dark!—Oh for one breath of prayer!

CONCLUSION.

The preceding confession, signed by the tremulous hand of the poor suicide, was found in her room, with the senseless corse, by the relative, to whom she addressed it, and who adds these concluding pages. For days after the event, the papers were filled with paragraphs, in regard to the melancholy affair. A single one extracted from a prominent paper, will give some idea of the tone of the public mind:

Extract from a New York Paper.

"TRAGEDY IN HIGH LIFE.

"THE town is full of rumors, in regard to a mysterious event, or series of events, implicating a member of one of the first families of New York. These rumors are singularly startling, and although they have not yet assumed a definite shape, certainly call for a judicial investigation. As far as we have been able to sift the stories now afloat, the plain truth, reduced to the briefest possible shape, appears to be as follows: Some

years since, Miss Marion M——, daughter of old Mr. M——, one of our first merchants, was, while under an engagement of marriage with Walter H——, forced into a marriage with Mr. Issachar B——, a man old enough to be her father, who, it is stated, had the father absolutely in his power. The marriage took place, but not long afterward, B——, while on a visit to Niagara, was precipitated over the Falls, at dead of night, in a manner not yet satisfactorily explained. Soon afterward the young widow, then immensely rich, encountered her former betrothed, and the fashionable world were soon afterward informed of their marriage. A year passed, and Walter H——, the husband of the former widow, was found in a distant part of the country, mysteriously murdered, it was not known by whom, although it was rumored at the time, that the brother of a wronged sister, was on that occasion the avenger of his sister's shame. The beautiful Mrs. H——, was once more a widow. Here it might seem that her adventures, connected so strangely with the death of two husbands, had reached their termination. But it seems she was soon fascinated by the eloquence of a young man and popular divine, Rev. H—— B——. While betrothed to Miss Fanny L——, daughter of a wealthy member of his congregation, the eloquent preacher became a visitor at the house of the rich widow, and finally his affections became entangled, and he was forced to choose between said widow and his betrothed. He sacrificed his affection for the former, to his solemn engagement with the latter. The 'sighted' widow, endured the usual pangs of 'despised love,' coupled with something very much like Italian jealousy, or rather jealousy after the Italian school. The betrothed was inveigled into a certain house, and her honor sacrificed by a gentleman of fashion, known for thirty years as a constant promenader, on the west side of Broadway, Mr. Gerald D——. The widow (strangest freak of a slighted and vindictive woman!) is said to have been the planner and instigator of this crime. We have now arrived at the sequel of the story. Unable to obtain the hand of the Rev. H—— B——, and stung by remorse, for her share in the dishonor of his betrothed, the

widow put a period to her own existence, in what manner is not exactly known, although conflicting rumors state the knife, or the poison vial was the instrument of her death. No coroner's inquest took place. The body gave no signs of a violent death. "Disease of the heart" was stated in the certificate of the physician, (how *compliant* he was to the wishes of rich survivors, we will not say,) as the cause of her unexpected disease. She was quietly buried in the family vault, and her immense estate descends to a relative, who was especially careful, in cloaking over the fact of the suicide. The tragedy involved in this affair, will be complete, when we inform the reader, that Mr. Gerald D——, has left the city, while his poor victim, Fanny L——, tenants the cell of an asylum for the insane. Altogether, this affair is one of the wildest exaggerations, or one of the most painful tragedies, that ever fell to the lot of the press, to record. Can it be believed that a young lady, honorably reared, would put a period to the lives of two husbands, then procure the dishonor of a rival, who interposed between her and a *third* 'husband?' Verily, 'fact is stranger than fiction,' and every day, reality more improbable than the wildest dreams of romance. The truth will not be known until the *CONFESSION, said to be left by the young widow, makes its appearance.* But will it appear? we shall see."

So much for the public press.

The reader can contrast its *rumors*, with the *facts* of the case, as plainly set forth in the previous confession, penned by the hand of the unfortunate and guilty Marion Merlin.

A few words more will close this painful narrative. Marion was quietly and honorably buried. Her relatives were wealthy and powerful. The 'physician's certificate' enabled them to avoid the painful formality of a coroner's inquest. She sleeps beside her husband, Walter Howard, in Greenwood Cemetery.

Soon after her decease, Mr. Lansdale sold all his property in New York, and with his daughter disappeared completely from public view.

Herman Barnhurst remained in the Lu-

natic Asylum for more than a year, when he was released, his intellect restored, but his health (it is stated) irretrievably broken. After his release, he left New York, and his name was soon forgotten, or if mentioned at all, only as that of a person long since dead.

Gerald Dudley, after various adventures, in Texas and Mexico, suffered at the hands of Judge Lynch, near San Antonio.

About a year after the death of Marion Merlin, a young man in moderate circumstances, accompanied by his wife, (a pale, faded, though interesting woman) and her aged father took up his residence in C—— a pleasant village in south-western Pennsylvania. They were secluded in their habits, and held but little intercourse with the other villagers. The husband passed by the name of Wilton, which (for all that the villagers knew to the contrary,) was his real name.

One winter evening, as the family were gathered about the open wood-fire, a sleigh halted at the door, and a visitor appeared in the person of a middle-aged man, who came unbidden into the room, shaking the snow from his great coat, and seating himself in the midst of the family. Regarding for a moment the face of the aged father, and then the countenance of the young husband and wife, which alike in their pallor, seemed to bear the traces of an irrevocable calamity, the visitor said quietly,—

"Herman Barnhurst, I am the relative to whom Marion Merlin addressed her confession, and whom she invested with the trusteeship of her estate."

Had a thunderbolt fallen into the midst of the party, it would not have created so much consternation, as these few words from the lips of the visitor. The young wife shrieked, the old man started from his chair; Herman Barnhurst, (otherwise called Mr. Wilton,) with the blood rushing to his pale face, said simply, "That accursed woman!"

"I hold her last Will and Testament in my hand," continued the visitor: "I am her nearest relative, and would inherit her estate, but for this will, by which she names *you and your wife Fanny, as the sole heirs of her immense property.*"

Herman took the Will from the visitor's hands.

"As administrator of her estate, I am here to surrender it into your hands. The will was made as a small atonement for the injury she caused you."

Herman quietly dropped the parchment into the fire :

"Her money and her memory are alike accursed. I will have nothing to do with either."

That night the relative turned his face eastward, to take possession of the estate of Marion Merlin.

And beneath this, in a different hand, was added the following singular narrative :

CHAPTER XV.

AFTER THE DEATH OF MARION.

A PLEASANT place, in summer time, was the country-mansion of the celebrated Doctor N——, situated upon the heights of Weehawken, about one mile from the Hudson River. A huge edifice of brick, separated from the high road by a garden, it was surrounded by tall trees, whose branches overhung its steep roof, and relieved by the background of the rich foliage and blossoms of the orchard trees. A pleasant place, in summer, was the mansion of the celebrated Doctor, but lonely enough, and desolate enough in winter. On this drear winter night, it looks sad and desolate as the grave. The sky above it is leaden, the trees around it are leafless, the garden white with snow, and the bitter wind howls dismally over the waste of snow, which clothes the adjacent fields. In the distance, the Hudson glitters dimly, white and cold, with fields of floating ice. It is near morning, and but a single room in the vast country mansion is tenanted. You can see a light trembling faintly through the half veiled window yonder; the window near the roof, in the southern wing.

It is near morning; but one person by a solitary light, keeps his vigil in the deserted mansion; a sleigh drawn by a single horse, (he has been driven hard, for there is foam upon his flanks) and moving noiselessly, without the sound of bells stops at the garden gate. Two persons, whose forms are wrapped in thick overcoats, and whose faces are concealed by fur caps, drawn low over

the brows, dismount and pass along the garden walk, bearing a burden on their shoulders. They ascend the steps of the porch, and stand in front of the hall door, looking anxiously about them, as if to assure themselves, their movements were not observed.

"So far safe enough," exclaims one in a hoarse voice, "the next thing is to get *it* up stairs." And he places a key in the lock of the door.

Meanwhile the light, which trembling outward from yonder window, shines redly over the frozen snow, shines within upon the face of the lonely watcher. A young man sits beside a table, reading by the light of a clouded lamp, his cheeks resting on his hands, and his gaze riveted upon the large volume, spread open before him. The light falls brightly upon the book, leaving his features in half twilight, but still you can trace the outlines of his face,—the enthusiasm of his fixed eyes,—the energy of his broad bold forehead. It is a small and comfortable apartment; near him a wood-fire is burning, on the open hearth; opposite him a sofa, and a range of shelves, filled with books, and upon the green cloth of the table by which he is seated, you discover a sort of semicircle of open volumes,—placed there evidently for reference,—a mass of carelessly strewn manuscripts, and a case of surgical instruments.

Arthur Conroy, the favorite student of the celebrated Doctor,—a student, whose organization combines the exactness and untiring industry of the man of science, with the rich enthusiasm of the poet,—is the only tenant of the mansion, during the dreary winter. He is not seen during the day, but every night, arriving from New York, after dark, he builds his fire, lights his candle, and commences his lonely vigil. Sometimes, late at night, he is joined by the grave Doctor himself, and they pursue their researches together. What manner of researches? We cannot tell; but there is a rumor, that one apartment of the huge mansion is used, in winter time, as a Dissecting-Room. And the light streaming night after night, from the window near the roof, strikes the lonely wayfarer with a sensation, in some manner, associated with ghosts, witches, and dealings with the *devil* in general.

Arthur is ambitious ; even while his mind is wrapt in the mazes of a scientific problem, he thinks of his widowed mother and orphan sisters far away in the great village near Seneca lake, and his pulse beats quicker, as he looks forward to the day when their ears shall be greeted by the tidings of his world-wide fame. For he has determined to be a surgeon, and a master in his art ; he has the will and the genius ; he will accomplish what he wills.

He raises his eyes from his book,—they are glittering with the clear light of intense thought,—and unconsciously begins to think aloud.

“Do the dead return ? Are the dead indeed *dead* ? You have nailed down the coffin-lid ; you have seen the coffin as it sunk into the grave ; you have heard the rattling of the clod,—but is that all ? Is the beloved one whom you have given to the grave, indeed *dead*, or only more truly living in a new body, formed of refined matter, invisible to our gross organs ? Is that which we call *soul*, only the result of a particular organization of gross matter, or is it the real, eternal substance of which all other matter is but the servant and the expression ? Do the dead return ? Do those whose faces we have seen for the last time, ere the coffin-lid closed upon them forever, ever come back to us, clad in spiritual bodies, and addressing us, not through our external organs, but by directly *impressing that divine substance* in us, which is like unto them,—that which we call our *soul* ?”

It was a thought which for ages has made the hearts of the noblest and truest of our race, alternately combat with despair, and swell with hope,—that thought which seeks to unveil the mystery of Life and Death, disclose the tie which connects perishable matter with eternal mind, and lift the curtain which hides from the present, the other world.

Arthur felt the vast thought gather all his soul into its embrace. But his meditations were interrupted by the opening of the door, and the two men,—whom we saw dismount from the sleigh,—entered the room of the student, bearing in their arms the burden, which was covered by folds of coarse canvas.

Very ungainly men they were, with their

brawny forms wrapped in huge gray overcoats, adorned with white buttons, and their harsh visages half concealed by their coarse fur caps. They came into the room without a word.

“O, you have come,” said Arthur, as if he recognized persons by no means strangers to him. “Have you the particular subject which the doctor desired you to procure ?”

“Jist that partikler subject,” said one of the twain,—“an’ a devil of a time we’ve had to git it ! First we entered the vault at Greenwood, with a false key, and then opened the coffin, so as it ’ll never be known that it was opened at all. Closed the vault ag’in and got the body over the wall, and hid it in the bottom of the sleigh. Crossed the ferry at Brooklyn—went through the city, and then took the ferry for Hoboken,—same sleigh, and same subject in the bottom of it ; an’ druv here with a blast in our face, sharp as a dozen butcher knives.”

“But if it had not a-been for the storm, we wouldn’t a-got the body,” interrupted the other.

“And here we *air*, and here *it* is, and that’s enough. What shall we do with it ?”

Arthur opened a small door near the book-case, and a narrow stairway (leading up into the garret) was disclosed.

“You know the way,” he said. “When you get up there place *it* on the table.”

They obeyed without a word. Bearing their burden slowly through the narrow doorway, they disappeared, and the echo of their heavy boots was heard on the stairway. They were not long absent. After a few moments they again appeared, and the one who had acted as principal spokesman, held out his open palm toward Arthur,—

“Double allowance to-night, you know,” he said,—“Doctor generally gives us from forty to sixty dollars a job, but this partikler case axes for ten gold pieces,—spread eagles, you know, wuth ten dollars apiece,—only a hundred dollars in all. Shell out !”

Arthur quietly placed ten gold pieces in the hands of the ruffian.—“The doctor left it for you. Now go.”

And shuffling their heavy boots, they disappeared through the same door by which they had entered. Looking through the

window after a few moments, he saw the sleigh moving noiselessly down the public road.

"Dangerous experiment for the doctor, especially if the *event* of this night should happen to be discovered," ejaculated Arthur, as he rebuilt his fire. "A peculiar case of suicide, and he wished *the body* at all hazards. Well! I must to work."

He drew on an apron of dark muslin, which was provided with sleeves, and then lifting the shade from the lamp, he lighted a cigar. As the smoke of the grateful Havana rolled through his apartment, he took the lamp in one hand, and a case of instruments in the other, and ascended the secret stairway leading to the garret.

"I have seen her when living, arrayed in all the pride of youth and beauty," he said, as the lamp shone upon the vast and gloomy garret,—“and now let me look upon the shell which so lately held that passionate soul.”

It was indeed a vast and gloomy garret. It traversed the entire extent of the southern wing. The windows at either end were carefully darkened. The ceiling was formed by the huge rafters and bare shingles of the steep roof. To one of these rafters a human skeleton was suspended, its white bones glaring amid the darkness. In the center was a large table, upon which was placed the burden which the ruffians had that night stolen from the grave. The place was silent, lonely,—the wind howled dismally among the chimneys,—and Arthur could not repress a slight shudder as his footsteps echoed from the naked floor. Arthur placed the lamp upon the table, and began to uncover the subject. Removing the coarse canvas he disclosed the corpse. An ejaculation burst from his lips,—a cry half of terror, half of surprise.

The light shone upon the body of a beautiful woman. From those faultless limbs and that snowy bosom the grave-clothes had been carefully stripped. A single fragment of the shroud fluttered around the right arm. Save this fragment the body was completely bare, and the dark hair of the dead fell loosely on her shoulders. The face was very beautiful and calm, as though sealed only for an hour in a quiet sleep,—the fringes of the eyelashes rested darkly upon the cheeks. Never had the light shone upon a shape of

more surpassing loveliness, upon limbs more like ivory in their snowy whiteness, upon a face more like a dreamless slumber, in its calm, beautiful expression. Dead, and yet very beautiful! A proud soul dwelt in this casket once,—the soul has fled, and now the casket must be surrendered to the scalpel,—must be cut and rent, shred by shred, by the dissector's hand.

"But the limbs are not rigid with death," soliloquized Arthur,—“Decay has not yet commenced its work. As I live, there is a glow upon the cheek.”

With his scalpel he inflicted a gash near the right temple, and at the same instant,—imagining he heard a footstep,—he turned his face over his shoulder. It was only imagination, and he turned again to trace the result of the incision.

The dead woman was in a sitting posture, her arms were folded over her breast; her eyes were wide open, she was gazing calmly into his face. Arthur fell back with a cry of horror.

"Nay, do not be frightened," said a low, although tremulous voice,—“I have simply been the victim of an attack of catalepsy.”

And while he stood spell-bound, his eyes riveted to her face, and his ears drinking in the rich music of her voice, she continued,—

"Catalepsy, which leaves the soul keenly conscious and in possession of all its powers, but without the slightest control over the body, which appears insensible and dead. The agony of that state is beyond all power of words! To hear the voices which speak over your coffin, and yet be unable to frame a word, to breathe even a sigh! I heard them talk over my coffin,—I was conscious as the lid closed down upon my face,—conscious when they placed me in the vault, and locked the door, and left me there buried alive. And an eternity seemed to pass from the time when they locked the door, (I was only buried yesterday,) until your men came to-night, to rob the grave of its prey. I heard every word they uttered from the moment when they tore the shroud from my bosom, until they entered your room, and then I heard your voice. And when they left me here, I heard your step upon the stair, heard your ejaculation as you bent over me, and it seemed to me that my soul made its last effort to arouse from this

unutterable *living death*, as you struck the knife into my temple. You have saved my life——”

Arthur could not utter a word; he could not believe the scene to be real; he thought himself the victim of a terrible although bewitching dream.

“I arise from the grave, but it is to begin life anew. The name which I bore lies buried in the grave vault. It is with a new name, and under new auspices, that I will recommence life. And as for you, I know you to be young, gifted, ambitious. I will show my gratitude by making your fortune. But you must swear, and now, never to reveal the secret of this night!”

“I swear it,” ejaculated Arthur, still pale and trembling.

“What, are you still afraid of me? Come near me,—nearer,—take my hand,—does that,—” and a bewitching smile crossed her face,—“does that feel like the hand of a dead woman?”

With these words the history of Marion came to a pause.

For the first time, Arthur Dermoyne raised his eyes from the pages which recorded the life of Marion Merlin. For an hour and more he had bent over those pages in profound and absorbing interest.

“Here, then, is the real secret of the life of Herman Barnhurst!” he ejaculated. “He was simply a sincere enthusiast, all his bad nature dormant, and all his good in active life, until this woman crossed his path. And the wife who now slumbers by his side, is none other than Fanny Lansdale, the victim of the unutterable crime. Who shall say that we are not, in a great measure, the sport of circumstance? How different would have been the life of Herman, had Marion never crossed his path?”

Something like pity for the crimes of Barnhurst began to steal over Dermoyne’s face, as he sat thus alone, in the solitude of the last hour of the night; but the thoughts of Alice, on her bed of shame and anguish, started up like a phantom and drove every throb of compassion from his soul.

“If Alice dies, there is but one way,”—he said moodily, with a fixed light in his eyes.—“But this Marion,—ah! Something

more of her history is written here. Let me read,—” Once more he bent over the Red Book. Even as his eyes were fixed upon the page, a shadow was cast over it, and then a dark object interposed between him and the light; and the next moment all was darkness. But on the instant, before the darkness came, he looked up, and saw before him a brawny form, a face stamped with ferocious brutality; an up-raised hand grasping a knife, which glittered as it rose. This he saw for an instant only, and then all was blackness.

“Not wid de knife, Dirk! Let me fix him wid dis,—and do yer see to de Red Book!”

There was a sound as of a weapon whizzing through the air, and Dermoyne was felled to the floor by a blow from the “Slung-shot.”

As the first gleam of morning stole into the bed-chamber, touching, with rosy light, the faces of the sleeping wife and her children, Barnhurst stealthily arose, dressed himself, and stole on tiptoe from the place. In the dark he descended the stairway, and all the while,—from loss of sleep, combined with the excitement of the past night,—he shook in every nerve. His thoughts were black and desperate.

“Ruin wherever I turn! If I escape this man, there remains the villain whom I met last night, in Trinity Church. On one side exposure, on the other death. What can be done? Cut the matter short, and renouncing all my prospects, seek safety in flight? or remain,—dare all the chances,—exposure,—the death of a dog,—all,—and trust to my good fortune?”

He paused at the foot of the stairway, and a hope shot through his heart,—“If I could see GODIVA all might yet be well! Yes, I must, I will see GODIVA.”

Uttering the name of GODIVA, (new to the reader and to our history,) he approached the parlor door. “Now for this man!” he said, and shuddered. He opened the door, and looked around; the first rays of morning were stealing through the window-curtains, but the room was vacant. Dermoyne was not there. The carpet was torn near the sofa, the table overturned, and there was blood upon the carpet and sofa. But Dermoyne had disappeared.

NEW YORK:

ITS

UPPER-TEN AND LOWER MILLION.

PART SIXTH.

DAY, SUNSET, NIGHT.

• DECEMBER 24, 1844.

CHAPTER I.

ARRAYED FOR THE BRIDAL.

IT was toward evening, when, amid the crowd of Broadway—that crowd of mad and impetuous life—there glided, like a specter through the mazes of a voluptuous dance, a man of sober habit, pallid face, and downcast eyes. Beautiful women, wrapped in soft attire, passed him every moment; brushed him with their perfumed garments; but he heeded them not. There was the free laugh, the buzz of voices, and the tramp of footsteps all about him, but he did not raise his eyes, nor bend his ear. Gliding along in his dark habit, he was as much alone on that thronged pathway, as though he walked the sands of an Arabian desert. A man of hollow cheeks, features boldly marked, and eyes large and dark, and shining with the fire of disease, or with the restlessness of a soul that had turned upon itself, and was gnawing ever and ever at its own life-strings.

His habit—a long black coat, single breasted, and with a plain white band about the neck—indicated that he was a Catholic Priest.

He was a Priest. Struck down in his early manhood by an irreparable calamity, he had looked all around the horizon of his life for—peace. Repose, repose—a quiet life—an obscure grave—became the objects of his soul's desire, instead of the ambitions which his young manhood had cherished.

As there was not peace within him, so he searched the world for it, and in vain.

He sought it in a money-bound Protestant church, behind whose pulpit-bible—like a toad upon an altar—Mammon, holy mam-

mon, squats in bank-note grandeur. And there, he found money, and much cant, and abundance of sect,—but no peace.

To the Catholic church he turned. Won by the poetry of that church—we use the word in its awful and intense sense, for poetry and religion are one—and, forgetful of the infernal deeds which demoniacs, in purple and scarlet, have done in the name of that church, tracking their footsteps over half the globe in blood, and lighting up the history of ten centuries, at least, with flames of persecution,—won by all that is good and true in that church, (which he forgot is good and true under whatsoever form it occurs,)—he sought repose in its bosom.

Did he find it? He found good and true men among priests and people; he found noble and pure women, in the valleys of the church; but, lifting his eyes to her lofty eminence, he too often saw purpled and mitred atheists, who, from their thrones, made sport of human misery, and converted Christ the Savior into the *Fetish* of a brutal superstition.

He had been to Rome; in Rome he saw the seamless coat of Christ made a cloak for every outrage that can be inflicted upon the human race.

Did he find peace? Yes, when vailing his eyes from the atrocities done in the name of the church, turning himself away from the scarlet-clad atheists, who too often mount her seats of power, he retreated within himself, opened the gospels, and from their pages saw kindle into life and love, the face of Him, whom priests may misinterpret or defame, but whose name forever, to suffering humanity, is "CONSOLATION."

As he passed thus along Broadway, buried

in his thoughts, and utterly unconscious of the scene around him, he felt a hand press his own. He awoke from his thoughts, stopped and looked around him. The crowd was hurrying by, but the person who pressed his hand had disappeared. Was that pressure of the hand a mere freak of the imagination? No; for the hand of the unknown had left within the hand of the Priest a neatly-folded letter, upon which, in a fair and delicate hand, was written his own name.

Stepping aside from the crowd, he opened and read the letter. It was very brief, but its contents called a glow to the pale cheek of the Priest.

He at once retraced his steps, and passed down Broadway, with a rapid and eager step. Hurrying through the gay crowd, he turned, in a few moments, into a street leading to the North River. The sun was setting, and cast the shadow of his slender form long and black over the pavement, as he paused in front of a stately mansion. He once more examined the letter, and then surveyed the mansion.

"It is the same," he said, and ascended the lofty steps and rang the bell. "Truly, the office of a Priest is a painful one," the thought crossed his mind; "he sees so much misery that he has not the power to relieve. Misery, under the rags of the hovel, and despair under the velvet of the palace."

A male servant, in livery, answered the bell, and glanced somewhat superciliously at the faded attire of the Priest. But he inclined his head in involuntary respect, as the Priest said, simply—

"I am Father Luke,—"

"This way, sir. You are expected," answered the servant; and he led Father Luke along a lofty hall, and into a parlor, over whose rich furniture shone dimly the light of the setting sun. "Remain here, sir, and I will announce your coming."

He left the Priest alone. Father Luke placed his hat upon a table, and seated himself in a chair. In a moment, resting his cheek upon his hand, and turning his eyes to the light, (which shone through the curtained window,) he was buried in thought again. His singular and remarkable face stood forth from the back-ground of shadow like a

portrait of another age. His crown was bald, but his forehead was encircled by dark hair, streaked with silver. As the light shone over that broad brow, and upon the great eyes, dilating in their sunken sockets, he seemed not like a practical man of the nineteenth century, but like one of those penitents or enthusiasts, who, in a dark age, shut up the fires of their agony, of trampled hope or undying remorse, within the shadows of a cloister.

"This way, sir,"—it was the voice of the servant, who touched him respectfully on the shoulder as he spoke.

Father Luke arose and followed him from the room, and up a broad stairway, and along a corridor: "At the end of this passage you will find a door. Open it and enter. You are expected there."

Passing from the corridor, lighted by the window at its extremity, the Priest entered a narrow passage where all was dark, and pursued his way until his progress was terminated by a door. He opened the door and crossed the threshold—but, upon the very threshold, stood spell-bound in surprise.

It was a large apartment, with lofty walls, and, instead of the cheerful rays of the declining sun, it was illuminated by a lamp with a clouded shade, which, suspended from the center of the ceiling, shed around a soft and mysterious light.

The walls were not papered nor paneled, but covered with hangings of a dark color. One part of the spacious chamber was occupied by a couch with a high canopy, and curtains whose snowy whiteness stood out distinctly from the dark back-ground. A wood fire was burning under the arch of the old-fashioned fire-place; and a mirror, in a frame of dark walnut, reflected the couch with its white canopy, and a table covered with a white cloth, which stood directly underneath the hanging lamp. Upon the white cloth was placed a crucifix, a book, a wreath of flowers.

The place was perfectly still, and the soft rays of the lamp, investing all its details with mingled light and shadow, gave an atmosphere of mystery to the scene.

Father Luke stood on the threshold, hesitating whether to advance or retreat, when a low voice broke the stillness:

"Come in, sir. I have waited for you."

And for the first time Father Luke took notice of the presence of the speaker. It was a woman, who, attired in black, sat in a rocking-chair, near the table, her hands folded over her breast. Her head and face were covered by a thick veil of white lace, which fell to her shoulders, contrasting strongly with her somber attire.

Father Luke entered and seated himself in a vacant chair, which stood near the table. Resting his arm on the table,—(he sat directly beneath the lamp, in a circle of shadow,)—and shading his eyes with his hand, he silently surveyed the woman, over whom the light fell in full radiance. There was dark hair, there were bright eyes, beneath that veil of lace; a young, a richly moulded form, beneath that garb of sable; but in vain he endeavored to trace the features of the unknown.

"You received a letter?" said the lady, in a low voice.

"As I was passing up Broadway, a few moments since, a letter was placed in my hand, bidding my presence at this house, on an errand of life and death."

She started at the sound of that sonorous and hollow voice, and, through her veil, seemed to survey him earnestly.

"I am glad that you have come. I thank you with all my soul. Although not a member of your church, I have heard of you for a long time, and heard of you as one who, having suffered much himself, was especially fitted to render consolation to the heart-broken and despair-stricken. Now I am heart-broken and despairing,"—she paused,—"*I am dying,*"—

"Dying?" he echoed.

"And have sent for you, believing you to be an honest man, not to hear confession of my sins, for they are too dark to be told or be forgiven. But to ask you a simple question, which I implore you to answer, not as a priest, but as a man;—to answer, not with the set phrases of your vocation, but frankly and fully, even as you wish to have peace yourself in the hour of death."

"And that question,"—the priest's head bent low upon his breast, and he surveyed her earnestly with his eyes hidden beneath his down-drawn brows.

"Do you believe in any Hereafter? Do

you believe in another world? Does the death of the body end the story? Or, after the death of the body, does the soul rise and live again in a new and diviner life?"

"My sister," said the priest, with much emotion, "*I know* that there is a hereafter,—*I know* that the death of the body, is not the end of all, but simply the first step in an eternal pilgrimage—"

"This you say as a man, and not as a priest,—this is your true thought, as you wish to have peace, in the hour of your death?"

"Even so," said Father Luke.

"Thank you, O, bless you with all my soul. One question more,—O, answer me with the same frankness.—In the next world shall we meet, and know the friends whom we have loved in this?"

"We shall meet, we shall know, we shall love them in the next world, as certainly as we ever met, knew and loved them in this," was the answer of Father Luke, given with all the force and earnestness of undeniable sincerity. "Do you think we gather affections to our heart, only to bury them in the grave?"

The lady rose from her chair,—

"I thank you, once more, and with all my soul. Your words come from your heart. They confirm the intuitions of my own heart. For the consolation which these words afford, accept the gratitude of a dying woman. And now,"—she extended her hand, "and now farewell!"

The priest, who, through this entire interview, had never ceased to regard her, with his eyes almost hidden by his down-drawn brows,—struggling all the while to repress an agitation which increased every moment, and well nigh mastered him,—the priest also rose with these words on his lips:

"You dying, sister! you seem young, and full of life, and with the prospect of long years before you."

It was either the impulse of madness, or the force of a calm conviction, which induced her to reply:

"In one hour I will be dead."

The priest silently took her offered hand, and at the same instant, emerged from the circle of shadow, into the full glow of the light. There was something like magic in the pressure of their hands.

And the woman lifted her veil, disclosing a beautiful face, which already touched with the pallor of death, was lighted by dark eyes, whose brightness was almost supernatural.

Lifting her gaze heaven-ward, she said, as though thinking aloud,—

"In another world, Ernest, I will meet, I will know, I will love you!"

But ere the words had passed her lips,—yes, as the slowly lifted veil disclosed her face,—the priest sank back, as though stricken by a blow from an iron hand, uttering a wild and incoherent cry,—sank back as though the grave had yielded up its dead, and confronted him with a form, linked with holy and yet accursed memories.

"O, Frank, is it thus we meet," he cried, and fell on his knees, and buried his face in his hands.

The sound of his voice, at once lifted the scales from her eyes,—she knew him,—the vague consciousness of his presence, which had agitated her for the past few moments, became certainty. She knew that in Father Luke, who knelt before her, she beheld Ernest Walworth, her plighted husband. Sad and terrible indeed, must have been the change, which had fallen upon his countenance, that she did not know him, when he sat before her in the shadow!

Trembling in every nerve, and yet strong with the energy of a soul, that had taken its farewell of this life, she gave utterance to her feelings, in a single word,—his own,—pronounced in the soft low tones of other days.

"Ernest!"

"O, Frank, Frank, is it thus we meet!" he cried in wild agony, as he raised his face. "You,—you,—the only woman that I ever loved,—you, whose very memory has torn my heart, since that fatal hour, when I met you in the accursed haunt of death,—"

"Ernest you will sit by me as I die, you will press your hand in forgiveness on my forehead, my last look shall encounter yours—"

She opened her dark robe, and disclosed the snow-white dress which she wore beneath it. That dress was a shroud. Yes, the beautiful form, the bosom which had once been the home of a pure and stainless love,

and which had beat with the throb of sensual passion, were now attired in a shroud.

"Behold me, attired for the grave," she said,—and the tears started to her eyes,—
"This morning, resolved to quit this life, which for me, has been a life of unutterable shame and despair, I prepared for my departure. Everything is ready. Come, Ernest, and behold the preparations for my bridal,—" she pointed to the couch; he rose and followed her. "I am in love with death, and will wed him ere an hour is gone." She drew aside the curtains, and upon the white coverlet, Ernest beheld a dark object,—a coffin covered with black cloth, and glittering with a silver plate.

"Everything is ready, Ernest, and I am going. Nay, do not weep, do not attempt to touch my hand. I am but a poor polluted thing,—a wreck, a miserable, miserable wreck! My touch would pollute you,—I am not worth your tears."

Ernest hid his face in the hangings of the couch,—he writhed in agony.

"You shall not die,—you must be saved!" he wildly exclaimed.

She walked across the floor, with an even step; in a moment she was seated in the rocking-chair, with Ernest before her, his face hidden in his hands. Her face grew paler every moment; her eyes brighter; and the shroud which enveloped her bosom, began to quiver, with the last pulsations of her dying heart. As the veil mingled its fleecy folds with her raven hair, she looked very beautiful, yes, beautiful with the touch of death.

And as Ernest, choked with his agony, sat before her, hiding his face, she talked in a calm, even tone,—

"O, life! life! you have been a bitter draught to me, and now I am about to leave you! All day I have been thinking of my shame, of my crimes,—I have summoned up every act of my life,—the images of the past have walked before me in a sad funeral procession. O, Thou, who didst forgive the Magdalene,—Thou who hadst compassion on the poor wretch, whose cross arose beside thine own,—Thou who dost know all my life, my temptations, and my crimes,—forgive! forgive! It is a wandering child, sick of wandering, who now,—O, Thou, all-mer-

ciful!—gathers up the wreck of a miserable life, and lays it, with all its sins and shame, at Thy feet.

As she uttered this simple, yet awful prayer, Ernest did not raise his face. The agony which shook him was too deep for words.

Her voice grew faint and fainter, as she went on, in a vague and rambling way—

"And I was so innocent once, and did not know what sorrow was, and felt such gladness, at the sight of the sky, of the stars, of the flowers,—at the very breath of spring upon my cheek! O, I wonder if the old home stands there yet,—and the nook in the forest, don't you remember, Ernest? I was so happy, so happy then! And now I am dying—dying,—but you are near. You forgive me, Ernest, do you not?"

"Forgive you!" he echoed, raising his face, and spreading forth his clasped hands, "God's blessing and His consolation be upon you now and forever! And His curse,—” a look of hatred, which stamped every lineament of his face, revealed the intensity of his soul,—“and His curse be upon those, who brought you to this!"

As he spoke, the death damps began to glisten on her forehead; a glassy look began to veil the intense brightness of her eyes.

"Your hand, sit by me,—” she said faintly, "I shall sleep soon."

He drew his chair to her side, and softly put his hand upon her forehead,—it was cold as marble.

"It is good to go thus,—with Ernest by me,—and in token of forgiveness too, with his hand upon my forehead—"

Her words were interrupted by a footstep and a voice.

"Frank! Frank! where are you! I have triumphed!—triumphed! The one child is out of my way, and the other is in my power!"

It was Colonel Tarleton, who rushed to the light, his face lividly pale, and disfigured by wounds, his right arm carried in a sling. He had not seen his daughter since the hour when he left the Temple, before the break of day. And now, faint with loss of blood, and yet strong in the consciousness of his triumph, he rushed into the death-room of his child.

"I have had a hard time, Frank, but the

game is won! The estate is ours! The other son of Gulian Van Huyden is in my power,—"

The words died on his lips. He beheld the dark form of the stranger, and the face of his dying child. The young form clad in a shroud; the countenance pale with death; the large eyes, whose brightness was veiled in a glassy film,—he saw this sad picture at a glance, but could not believe the evidence of his senses.

"Why, Frank, what's all this?" he cried, as with his pale face, marked by wounds, he stood before his daughter.

She slowly raised her eyes, and regarded him with a sad smile.

"The poison, father,—I drank it myself; he went forth from this house safe from all harm—"

Her voice failed.

Tarleton uttered a frightful cry, and fell like a dead man on the floor, his face against the carpet. The reality of the scene had burst upon him; in the hour of his triumph he saw his schemes,—the plans woven through the long course of twenty-one years and darkened by hideous crimes,—leveled in a moment to the dust.

Frank slowly turned her head, and fixed her glassy eyes upon the face of Ernest,—O, the intensity of that long and yearning gaze!

"I am weary and cold," she gasped, "but it is light yonder."

And that was all. Her eyes became fixed,—she laid her head gently on her shoulder, and fell asleep.

She was dead!

Ernest knelt beside her, and with his eyes flashing from their sunken sockets, he clasped his hands and uttered a prayer for the dead.

There were footsteps in the passage and presently into the death-room came Mary Berman and Nameless, their faces stamped with the same look in which hope and terror mingled. Nameless bore the last letter of Frank in his hand; it had hurried him and Mary from the corpse of the artist to the home of Frank, and they arrived only in time to behold her dead.

"She died to save my life!" said Nameless solemnly, as he surveyed that face which looked so beautiful in death. That there

were strong emotions tugging at his heart,—emotions such as are not felt twice in a lifetime,—need not be told.

And Mary, with tears upon her pure and beautiful face, stole silently to the side of the dead woman, and smoothed her dark hair, and put her kiss upon her clammy forehead, and closed those eyes which had looked their last upon this world.

The prayer was said, and Ernest, resting his hands upon the arm of the chair in which the dead woman sat, hid once more his face from the light, and surrendered himself to the full sway of his agony.

A voice broke the dead stillness, and a livid face was uplifted from the floor.

"It's an infernal dream, Frank. You could not have been so foolish! The estate is ours,—ours,—"

He saw at the same glance the face of Nameless and the face of his dead child.

Here let us return for a moment to Maryvale, the old mansion in the country, to which, this morning before break of day, the UNKNOWN, (in whom you doubtless recognize Gaspar Manuel, or the Legate,) had conducted the boy, Gulian, the private secretary of Evelyn Somers, Sr.

The contest between Tarleton and the dog Cain, in the presence of young Gulian, will be remembered; as well as the fact, that even as Tarleton, suffering from his wounds, attempted to bear Gulian from the house, he fell insensible at his victim's feet.

An hour afterward, when the light of day shone on the old mansion, the Legate returned and eagerly sought the chamber of young Gulian. The floor was stained with blood, the dead body of Cain was stretched at his feet, but the boy had disappeared. The Legate was a man, who, through the course of long years had learned to restrain all external signs of emotion, but when he became conscious that young Gulian was gone,—he knew not whither,—his agitation broke forth in the wildest expressions of despair.

"But I will again rescue him from his persecutor. Yes, before the day is over, he will be safe under my protection."

And himself and his numerous agents sought the city through all day long; and sought in vain.

CHAPTER II.

HERMAN AND GODIVA.

OUR history now returns to Madam Resimer, whom we left in her most secret chamber, near ten o'clock, on the 24th of December, listening to the sound of the bell, which resounded through her mansion.

It was the bell of the secret passage.

"Who can it be?" again ejaculated the Madam, as she stood in the center of the room, with the light of the candle on one side of her florid face.

To which Corkins, who stood behind her, his slender form lost in her capacious shadow, responded in a quivering voice, "Who can it be?"

Much troubled and very angry, and not knowing upon whom to vent her anger, the Madam turned upon her trembling satellite, and addressing him by numerous titles, not one of which but was more vigorous than elegant or complimentary, she bade him,—

"Run for your life. Answer the bell of the secret passage! Don't be foolin' away your time, when the very devil's to pay and no pitch hot. Cut!"

Corkins accordingly "*cut*," or, to speak in a less classical phrase, he glided from the room.

How anxiously the Madam waited there, in her most secret chamber, with her finger to her lip, and the candle-light on one side of her face!

"Who can it be? Only four persons in the world know of this secret passage. It can't be this devil from Philadelphia? O, I shall do somebody a mischief! I can't endure this any longer,—"

Hark! There are footsteps in the corridor; they approach the Madam's room. She fixes her small black eyes upon the door, with the intensity of a—cat, contemplating a rat-hole.

"This way," cries the voice of Corkins, and he enters the room, followed by two persons, one of whom is taller than the other, and both of whom wear caps and cloaks.

"Has he come back?" cries the taller of the two, in a voice that trembles with anxiety and fear,—he lifts his cap, and discloses the face of Herman Barnhurst.

"No,—no,—I haven't laid eyes upon him since last night," and she clutched Barnhurst by the arm,—“Where did you leave him?”

“He went home with me,” replied Barnhurst, and stopped to gaze around that room, dimly lighted by a single candle, as though he was afraid that Dermoyne was concealed in its shadows.—“I left him in the parlor down stairs. He was determined to wait for me until morning, and then come with me to this house. But this morning, when I came down stairs, he was not there.”

“He was not there?” echoed the Madam, breathless with impatience.

“He wasn't there; there was blood upon the sofa and the carpet, and marks of a struggle.”

The Madam uttered a round oath and a cry of joy.

“Good,—capital! My boys have done their work. You see, Herman, I sent Dirk and Slung after him, and they've laid him out. It's a sure thing.”

Herman, even in his fright, could not but help shuddering, as he heard the cool manner in which she spoke of Dermoyne's death. The next instant the idea of his own safety rose uppermost in his mind.

“Do you think that your fellows have taken good care of him?” he asked.

“Don't doubt it,—don't doubt it,” and she rubbed her hands joyfully together. “It's a sure thing!”

A raven-like voice, behind her, echoed, “Sure thing!” It was Corkins, of course.

“And *she*,—how is *she*?”—Herman lowered his voice, and pointed upward.

“She is well!” was the emphatic response of the Madam,—“But how did you know of the secret bell? Only four persons in the world know of it, and you are not one of them.”

Herman pointed to the person who had entered with him, and who now stood in the darkness at his back,—“Godiva!” he said.

The Madam gave a start, echoing “Godiva,” and Corkins, behind the Madam, as in duty bound, re-echoed “Godiva!”

The person called by this name,—the name of the beautiful lady, famed in ancient story, for the sacrifice which she made of her modesty in order to achieve a noble purpose,—advanced from the shadows into the light,

saying, “This boy came to me this morning, in a world of trouble; he confided all his sorrows to me. It appears he is in a devil of a scrape. I came here to get him out of it.”

And removing cap and cloak, Godiva stood disclosed in the candle-light. Godiva was a woman of some twenty-five years, with a rounded form, brown complexion, large eyes that were hazel in the sun, and black by night; and Godiva wore her raven hair in rich masses on either side of her warm, tropical face. Godiva was dressed, not in those flowing garments which give such bewitching mystery to the form of a lovely woman, but, in male costume from head to foot,—a shirt, with open collar, dark satin vest, blue frock-coat, black pantaloons, and boots of patent leather. Although looking short in stature beside the tall Barnhurst, she was tall for a woman, and her male costume, which did full justice to her throat, her ample bust, and rounded limbs, became her exceedingly.

With her cloak on her right arm, her cap in her right hand, she rested her left hand on her hip, and looked in the face of the Madam with an air of insolent condescension that was quite refreshing.

“How do you *do*, my dear child?”—and the Madam offered her hand. Godiva waved her back.

“Don't be impertinent, woman,” was the response. “The few days that I once passed in your house, by no means give you the right to be familiar. I am here, simply, for two reasons,—I wish, in the first place, to get the boy (she pointed to Barnhurst,) out of his ‘scrape;’ and, in the second place, to recover a certain manuscript which, it seems, I left in this house when I was here.”

The Madam was an essentially vulgar, as well as wicked woman, but she could not help feeling the cutting insolence which marked the tone of the queenly Godiva.

“There is no *such* manuscript here,” she said, tartly, and her thoughts reverted to the Red Book.

“Hadn't you better wait to know what kind of manuscript it was, before making such a flat denial?” coolly responded Godiva. “But now let's talk of this boy! What's the amount of his entanglements? How's the girl?”

"She is well," said the Madam, emphatically.

"Well!" croaked Corkins from the back-ground.

"And this fellow from Philadelphia—was he really such a desperate creature?" asked Godiva.

"A devil incarnate," replied the Madam.

"What's that?" cried Herman, with a start, as the sound of a bell once more rang through the mansion.

"It's the bell of the door in the alley. Run, Corkins! It's Dirk and Slung. Bring 'em up,—'put', I say!"

Corkins "put," and the party waited for his return in evident anxiety. It was not long before there was the tramp of heavy steps in the passage, and two men, roughly clad—one, short, thick-set, and bow-legged, the other, tall and bony—stumbled into the room, bringing with them the perfume of very bad liquor.

"Where's de ole woman?" cried Dirk; "What in de thunder de yer have candles a-burnin' in daylight for—s-a-y?"

"Ole lady, I'll finger dat pewter—I will," said Slung-shot. "We laid yer man out—we did. Dat cool hundred, ef yer please."

And while Herman and Godiva glided into the shadows, the two ruffians recounted the incidents of the night, in their peculiar *patois*; the Madam interrupting them with questions, at every step of the narrative.

The story of these savages of city life, (and we believe that only the English and American cities produce such ruffians in a perfect state of brute-and-devil completeness,) reduced to the briefest compass, and stripped of all its oaths, read thus:—They had followed Dermoyne and Barnhurst all night long. Entering the house of Barnhurst, (the door had been left ajar,) they had found Dermoyne seated on the sofa, his eyes fixed upon a book. As one struck him with the slung-shot, the other extinguished the light, and a brief but terrible contest took place in the dark. Finally, they had borne the insensible form of Dermoyne from the house, and flung him into the gutter of a dark and deserted street.

"An' dere he'd freeze to death, ef he gets over de dirk and de slung-shot—he would," added the thick-set ruffian.

"And where have you been ever since?" asked the Madam, whose little eyes sparkled with joy.

"Gittin' drunk," tersely remarked Dirk.

"The book—you have it?" she said eagerly.

To which Dirk replied, in his own way, that if he had, he hoped his eyes and liver might be made uncomfortable for an indefinite length of time.

"Fact is, it slid under de sofar in de muss, an' I couldn't find it in de dark."

The Madam burst into a transport of fury, and in her rage administered the back of her hand somewhat freely to the faces of Dirk and Slung. "Out of my sight—out of my sight! Fools! Devils! That book was all that I sent you after!" and she fairly drove them from the room. They were heard shuffling in the passage, and murmuring and cursing as they went down stairs.

"The miserable knaves! What trust can you put in human natur' arter this!" and she fretted and fumed along the room.

"The book is safe in my house," said Barnhurst, advancing, his face glowing with satisfaction. "This fellow, it appears, is safe. I pledge my word to have that book in this room before an hour."

Godiva, looking over his shoulder, muttered in a tone inaudible to the others: "And my manuscript is in the book, and I pledge my word to have that within an hour."

"If you do that, Herman, I'll sell my soul for you!" cried the Madam, warmly.

"Suppose we look at the—the *patient*," whispered Herman.

"Up-stairs in the same room;" and Herman and Godiva left her room together, and directed their steps toward the chamber of Alice.

"The book is safe; he'll keep his word—don't you think so, Corkins?" said the Madam, as she found herself once more alone with her familiar spirit.

"Safe—perfectly," returned Corkins, when his words were interrupted by the ring of a bell. It was the front door bell this time. Corkins hurried from the room, and in a few moments returned, and placed a card in the hands of the Madam:

"This person wants to see you."

Drawing near the candle, the Madam read

upon the card this name—"DR. ARTHUR CONROY." A name, you will remember, associated with the history of Marion Merlin. It was Arthur Conroy, who, in the dissecting room, saw the corpse before him start suddenly into life.

"Dr. Conroy!"—it seemed a familiar name to the Madam. "I wonder if he wants a subject? Show him up, Corkins."

Through the bowed window-shutters and the drawn curtains, the winter sunlight stole into the chamber of Alice, lighting up the bed, and touching with a few golden rays the face of the Virgin Mary on the wall.

Herman and Godiva stood by the bed, their backs toward the window, and their faces from the light. They did not speak. The room was breathlessly still.

Alice was there, resting on the bed, the coverlet drawn up to her neck, and her cheek pressed against the pillow, thus turning her face to the light. One hand and arm lay motionless on the coverlet, and her sunny hair strayed in unbound luxuriance over the pillow. Her eyes were closed; her lips slightly parted; her cheek pale as the pillow on which she slept: for she was sleeping. A bright ray, that found entrance through an aperture in the curtains, was playing over her face, now on her lips, now on her throat, and among the waves of her silken hair. The sight was so beautiful that Godiva, whose heart had long since ceased to feel, was awed into silence. As for Herman, he could not take his eyes away, but stood there with his gaze chained to the face of the sleeping girl; for she was sleeping—sleeping that dear, quiet sleep, which, in this world, never knows an awakening hour. In the language of the woman-fiend, she indeed "was well!" Dead, with the second life which she bore, dead within her. Poor Alice! She had only opened her wings in the world, to fold them again and die.

"Herman," whispered Godiva, "look at that! Are you not proud of your work?"

"Don't taunt me, Marion," he answered. "Had I never met you—had you never made my life but one continued dream of sensuality—I would not stand here at this hour, gazing upon this murdered girl.

"Sweet boy! And so, when I first met

you, you believed all that you preached in the pulpit?"

"If I did not believe it, I certainly did not wish to doubt it. You, and the life I've led since first I knew you, have made me dread the very mention of the existence of a God, or of the immortality of the soul."

"Pretty boy! How sadly I've used you! But don't call me Marion again;—that name I left in the grave. Leave off preaching, and let us see what you intend to do?"

"Godiva, whichever way I look is ruin. I am rid of this Dermoyne; but there are those persons who, conscious of the *event of that night in November, 1842*, will expose me to the world, unless I become their tool, in regard to the heirs of Anreke Jans and Trinity Church. I am sick of this life of suspense and dread! Let us fly, Godiva; I will change my name, and, in some distant place, begin life anew."

"What, and leave your wife?"

"Take care, Godiva, take care! Don't press me too hard! You know who it was that planned the dishonor of that wife, when she was a maiden, and betrothed to me. Take care!"

"You needn't look so black at me with those devilish eyes," said Godiva, as her face lost that bitter sneer, which, for the last few moments, had made her resemble a beautiful fiend. "You mustn't be angry at my jests. Well—let us travel! I have money enough for both, and we can enjoy ourselves with money anywhere. But the Van Huyden estate?"

"I cannot call my share my own, even if a share should happen to fall to me. These people who knew of the *event in 1842*, and who are now playing conspirator between Trinity Church and the heirs of Anreke Jans, will demand my share as the price of their silence. I cannot live in this state of dread. Listen Godiva! A vessel sails this afternoon for one of the West India Islands. What think you of a life in the tropics, far away from this devilish *practical* world? Why, we can make an Eden to ourselves, and forget that we ever lived before! I have engaged passage for two on board this vessel. It makes my heart bound! Groves of palm—a cloudless sky—good wine—days all dream, and nights!—ah, Godiva! Flight, Godiva, flight!"

"Flight be it, and to-night?" cried Godiva, winding her arm about Herman's neck.

They were disturbed by a sound, low and scarcely audible—it resembled the sound of a footstep. Herman turned his head, and saw, between him and the doorway, the haggard face of—Arthur Dermoyne, whose cheek was marked with a hideous gash, but whose eyes shone with a clear unfaltering light.

Herman read his death in those eyes.

Let us turn from this scene, and enter once more the secret chamber of the Madam.

"Why, Doctor, I am glad to see you!" she cried, as Doctor Arthur Conroy entered her room; "I haven't clapped eyes upon you for a dog's age. Why, bless me, how changed you are!"

As Conroy flung his cloak upon a chair, and advancing to the light, seated himself opposite the Madam, it was evident that he was indeed changed. His eyes were dull and heavy, his cheeks bloated; the marks of days and nights spent in sensual excess, were upon every lineament of his once noble face. A sad, a terrible change! Can this man who sits before us, with his coat buttoned to the chin, and his heavy eyes rolling vacantly in his bloated countenance, be the same Arthur Conroy whom we first beheld in the lonely hour of his student vigil, his eyes dilating with a noble ambition, his forehead stamped with thought, with genius?

"I am changed," he said sullenly and with a thick utterance; "let me have some brandy."

The Madam, without a word, produced a bottle and a glass. Conroy filled the glass half-full, and drank it, undiluted with water, and without removing the glass from his lips.

And then his faded eyes began to flash and his cheek to glow.

It was the most melancholy kind of intemperance—that which drinks alone, and drinks in silence, and, instead of rousing the social feelings, or the grotesque fancies of drunken mirth, calls up the images of the past, and bids them feed upon the soul.

"Good brandy that! It warms the blood!"

"Why, Conroy, I have not seen you since you brought Godiva here, and that is a year and I don't know how many months ago."

"May God,"—he ended the sentence with an awful imprecation upon the very name of Godiva. And his face grew wild with hatred.

"Why I thought she was a favorite of yours, or you of hers," said the Madam.

"By ——! I wish I had buried my knife in her heart, as she lay on the dissecting table before me!" he cried, his voice hoarse with emotion. Look at me! When first I met that woman I was studious, ambitious; the thought of my mother and two sisters, who depended upon my efforts, stirred me into superhuman exertion. Well!—It is not *quite a century* since I met that woman, and look at me now—a gambler—a drunkard; yes," he struck the table with his fist—"Arthur Conroy is come to that! My mother dead, of a broken heart, and my sisters, well!—my sisters—"

As he tried to choke down his emotion, his features worked as with a spasm.

"Well! never mind!—and the accursed woman, whom I brought to your house, in order to kill the fruits of her passion,—she is the cause of all,—"

The light which left the greater part of the room in shadow, fell strongly over the florid face of the Madam, manifesting vague astonishment; and the flushed visage of Conroy, working with violent emotions.

"Yes," he said, as though thinking aloud, while his eyes shone with the brilliancy of a lighted coal,—"she was to make my fortune; she was to aid me, as I ascended that difficult path, which ambition treads in pursuit of fame. How smooth her words! I called her back from the dead,—she recovered from her relative a large portion of her property, sacrificing the rest, on condition that he concealed the fact of her existence from the world,—and I loved her, became the inhabitant of her mansion, the companion of her voluptuous hours. The she-devil! look to what she has brought me!"

"I wonder if he wants to borrow money?" said the Madam, in a sort of stage-whisper.

"No he does not," returned Conroy, with a scowl,—"*He* wants to do you a service, good lady. This morning about daybreak, as I was returning from the Club-Room, I came across a poor devil in the streets, who had been shockingly abused by ruffians,—"

"Ah!" and the Madam sank back in her chair.

"I could not let him die there, so I dragged him to the house of a clergyman, hard by, and laid him on the sofa. Then, assisted by the wife of the clergymen, a good sort of woman,—I dressed the wounds of the poor devil, and brought him to."

"The name of the clergyman?" asked the Madam, biting her lips.

"Barnet, or Barnhurst, or some such name."

"Ah!" and the Madam changed color, "and you left this man there?"

"He must have had a constitution of iron, to stand all those knocks! Do you know in a little while he was on his feet, explaining to the clergyman's lady, that he had come home with her husband, the night before, and had been dragged by unknown ruffians, from that very house,—"

"The dev-i-l!" and Madam clutched the arms of her chair, as she tried to restrain the rage, which filled every atom of her bulky frame.

"And now, he's down stairs at the door—"

"Down stairs at the door!" she bounded from her chair.

"He has a book under his arm, bound in red morocco," continued Dr. Conroy,— "and he desires to see you on particular business," and Conroy filled another glass, half full of brandy.

Once more to the death-room of Alice.

Dermoyne, who was as white as a sheet, stood but one step from the threshold, Godiva was by the bed, Herman near the head of the bed: thus Godiva was between the avenger and his victim.

Herman read his death in the eyes of Dermoyne, and looked to the window, as though he thought of raising the sashing, and dashing himself to pieces upon the pavement.

Godiva also caught the eye of Dermoyne,—she saw, that weak as he was from his wounds, and the loss of blood, that he was nerved by his emotions, by his purpose, with superhuman strength,—she saw the pistol in his hand. And all the craft of her dark and depraved nature, came in a moment to her aid. She resolved to save Herman,—that is, if her craft could save him.

"Hush! hush!" she whispered, "do not awake the sleeping girl! She has had a hard night, but now all is well. Hush! tread lightly,—lightly!—"

"Then she lives!" cried Dermoyne, and his savage eyes lit up with joy.

"Lives, and is doing well, don't you see how sweet she sleeps?" said Godiva advancing to him, on tip-toe, "Generous man! How can I thank you for your kindness to my cousin, poor, dear Alice?"

"Your cousin?" without another word, she flung herself upon Dermoyne's breast, wound her arms tightly about his neck, and hung there like a tigress upon the neck of her victim.

"Now's your time, Herman!" she cried,—and Dermoyne struggled madly in her embrace, but her arms wound closer about his neck, and he struggled in vain. His pistol fell to the floor.

Herman rushed by him, and the next instant, Dermoyne had unwound the arms of Godiva, and flung her violently to the floor. He turned to the door,—it was closed and locked,—Herman had escaped.

"Villain, you shall pay for this with your life!" he cried, as with flaming eyes, he advanced upon the prostrate Godiva.

"Don't be rash, my dear," she said, as seated on the floor, she was coolly engaged in arranging her disheveled hair, "You can't strike me. I'm a woman."

"A woman?" he echoed incredulously.

"Yes,—and a very good looking one,—don't you think so?" and she looked at him in insolent composure, while her vest,—torn open in the struggle,—displayed a glimpse of her neck and bosom.

Who, in this calm shameless thing,—proud at once of her beauty, and her shame, would recognize the innocent Marion Merlin of other years? With an ejaculation of contempt and anger, Dermoyne turned away from her, and approached the bed of Alice.

Alice was indeed sleeping there, her cheek upon the pillow, her lips apart, and with a ray of sunshine upon her closed eyelids, and sunny hair.

Dermoyne felt his heart die within him at the sight. There are emotions upon which it is best to drop the veil, for words are too weak to picture their awful intensity.

He called her name, "Alice!" and spreading forth his arms, he fell insensible upon the bed, his lips pressing the forehead of the dead girl.

Godiva rose, closed her vest, and calmly surveyed the scene, with her eyes shadowed by her uplifted hand:—

"I believe upon my soul, he did love her!" was her comment, and a tear shone in her eye.

The key turned in the lock, and presently a man with flushed face, and unsteady step, appeared upon the threshold. It was Arthur Conroy.

"Halloo! what's up?" he cried, with a thick utterance.—"That you Divy?" and staggering over the floor, he attempted to put his arm about her neck.

"Beast!" she cried, and struck him in the face. And ere he had recovered from the surprise of the blow, she glided from the room.

Seating himself on the foot of the bed, his eyes rolling in the vacancy of intoxication, he began to mutter words like these,—

"I'd a-better have cut you up, when I had you on the dissectin' table—I had. 'Beast,' You've served the devil for very small wages, Arthur Conroy! Ha, ha,—its a queer world."

Shall we ever see Herman and Godiva, Conroy and Dermoyne again?

CHAPTER III.

THE DREAM-ELIXIR.

THE Twenty-Fourth of December was a happy day with Randolph Royaltou. One happy day, after a long month devoted to agony and despair! Early morning light, found him in an upper chamber of the mansion, near the window, his form half concealed among the curtains, but his pale countenance, fully disclosed. There was thought upon his broad white forehead, relieved by the jet-black hair, an emotion of unspeakable tenderness,—passion,—in his large, clear blue-eyes, and all the while upon his lips, an expression in which hatred mingled with contempt. For three images rose before him,—his future, and that was hard to read, and buried him in thought,—Eleanor, young and beautiful, and willing to become his own, and that

filled his eyes with the light of passion,—his Brother, whom he had left helpless and insensible in a distant chamber, and who had met all his offers of fraternal love with withering scorn, and that thought curled his lip with mingled hatred and contempt.

In his hand he held a letter, which had just been delivered by Mr. Hicks, and before him were two huge trunks, one bearing the name of "Randolph Royaltou, Heidleberg," and the other the name of "Esther Royaltou, Hill-Royal, S. C." These trunks which had just arrived in a mysterious manner, had been placed in his room by the hand of a servant.

On his way south, about a month before, Randolph had left his trunk in Washington, and hurried home, eager to see his father. When Esther was brought to Washington, by her brother and her purchaser, her trunk was brought with her from Royaltou. And when Randolph and Esther escaped from Washington, they took their trunks with them as far as Philadelphia, where they left them in their eagerness to escape from their pursuers.

And now these trunks,—containing all that they were worth in the world,—had by some unknown person, been brought to the house in Broadway, and delivered into the servant's hands, accompanied by the note which Randolph held.

"Brother!" ejaculated Randolph, thinking of Harry Royaltou, whom he had left weak and helpless in a distant chamber,—a chamber which Randolph had given up to him—"Brother! I am afraid our accounts draw to a close. I'm afraid that your nature cannot be changed. Shall I have to fight you with your own weapons? Last night I saved your life,—I brought you to my own home; I laid you on my own bed; I watched over you, and when you woke, held out to you a brother's hand. That hand you struck down in scorn! So much the worse for you, dear brother. Your condition will not allow you to leave this house for a day or two,—at least not until *to-morrow* is over. And *to-morrow* past, brother, you will forfeit all interest in the Van Huyden Estate.

Randolph was a generous and a noble man, but there were desperate elements within, which the events of the last month had

begun to develop. He now felt that his fate would be decided and forever, by the course of the next twenty-four hours. And every power of his soul, all the strength, the good,—shall we say evil?—began to rise within him to meet the crisis. There was energy in his look, danger in his eye.

"And Eleanor,—" he breathed that name and paused, and for a moment he was enveloped in the atmosphere of an intense but sinless passion. "Eleanor loves me! She will be mine!"

But how should his marriage with Eleanor be accomplished, without the fatal disclosure, that instead of being the legitimate child of John Augustine Royaltan, he was simply—the White Slave of his own brother?

The thought was madness, but Randolph met it, and rousing every power of his soul, sought to pierce the clouds which hung upon his future.

He opened the letter, which Mr. Hicks had delivered to him, and recognized the hand of his unknown protector,—his friend of the Half-Way House. It was dated "Dec. 24th," 1844, and these were its contents:—

"TO RANDOLPH ROYALTAN:—

"When first I met you and your sister at the house near Princeton, and heard the story of your wrongs, in you I recognized the children of an old and dear friend, John Augustine Royaltan. I determined to protect you. You know how my plans were laid. Your brother, also your persecutor, was delivered to punishment. Yourself and sister were brought to New York, and placed in the mansion which you now occupy. Last night, wishing to know whether there yet remained in your brother one throb of a better nature—conscious that if his feelings to you were unchanged, you would at no moment be safe from his vengeance,—I arranged your meeting with him and his instrument, in the den below Five Points. From old Royal (whom I first met in Philadelphia, and who told me of your story before I saw you at the half-way house,) I have learned all that occurred last night,—the attack made on you by your brother,—your magnanimous conduct,—the awful, although richly deserved death of Bloodhound, his

atrocious tool. And although I know not what became of your brother after you bore him from the den, I doubt not but that you have placed him where he will be watched over with affectionate care.

"Yesterday I encountered Mr. Bernard Lynn, who seemed to take a great interest in you. I directed him to your house,—treat him as your guest in your own house,—for I especially desire you to regard the house and all it contains as yours, until the 25th of December has passed. Until then be perfectly at your ease. Await the developments of the 25th of December. In the meantime, if you want money, you will find it in the drawer of the desk (of which I inclose the key,) which you will find in your bed-room. Your trunks, which you lost in Philadelphia, I have recovered and send to you. Make no effort to see me, until I call upon you.

"Your friend,

"EZEKIEL BOGART."

In the letter there was much food for thought.

"So far all well," thought Randolph,—
"but *to-morrow* once passed, what then?"

He unlocked his trunk, and after a careful examination, found that its contents remained the same as when he had left it in Washington. It was very large, and divided into various compartments, and contained his wardrobe, his choicest books, and most treasured letters, together with numerous memorials of his student life in Heidelberg. Opening a small and secret drawer, he drew forth a package of letters, held together by a faded ribbon.

"Ah! letters from my father!" and he untied the package,—
"What is this? I never saw it before!"

It was a letter directed to him in his father's hand, and sealed with his father's seal. To his complete astonishment the seal was unbroken.

"How came this letter here? My father's seal and unbroken,—this is indeed strange!"

He regarded the letter carefully, weighed it in his hand, but paused, in hesitation, ere he broke the seal. For the first time, written around the seal, in his father's hand, he beheld these words, "*Not to be opened until my death.*"

Tears started into Randolph's eyes, and for a moment, as he knelt there, he rested his forehead on his hand.

Then, with an eager hand, he broke the seal. The contents of the letter were bared to the light.

"HEIDELBERG, September 23, 1840.

"DEAREST SON:—

"You have just left me, and with the memory of our late conversation fresh in my mind, I now write this letter, which you will not read until I am dead. Randolph, I repeat the truth of that which I have just disclosed to you,—your mother was not my mistress, but my lawful wife. Yourself and Esther are legitimate. By my will I make you, with Harry, joint inheritors of my estate, and of my share in the Van Huyden estate.

"Your mother, Herodia, was not the child of Colonel Rawdon, but the dearly beloved daughter of ———, who never acknowledged her to the world. He communicated, however, the secret of her paternity to Rawdon, and left her in his charge, intrusting him with a sealed packet, which he directed should be delivered to Herodia's son, in case a son was ever born to her. A packet which contained a commission, upon whose fulfillment by that son, the happiness, the destiny of all the races on the American continent, might depend. Worshipping the memory of this great man, Rawdon treated Herodia (known as a slave) as his own child and would not transfer her to me, until I had made her my wife in a secret marriage.

"A sealed copy of my will I gave you a few moments since; and this letter contains an original letter of ———, written to Colonel Rawdon, and recognizing Herodia as his child.

"When I am dead, you will find the packet in a secret closet behind the fourth shelf of my library, at Hill Royal. There you will also find a large amount of gold, which may be useful to you in some unforeseen hour of adversity, and which I hereby give to you and Esther.

"This letter I inclose in the package of letters which you left for my perusal.

"Your father,

"JOHN AUGUSTINE ROYALTON,

"of Hill Royal."

Randolph read this letter with signs of emotion not to be mistaken. Rising from his knees, he walked slowly up and down the room, his eyes shaded by his uplifted hand. As he drew near the window, his pale face was flushed, his eyes radiant with new light.

"So! I am then the elder brother, the real lord of Hill Royal! My mother was a slave, but she was the lawful wife of my father." His brow clouded and his lips curved. "It seems to me this younger brother has given us trouble enough,—let him have a care how his shadow crosses my way for the future."

He stood erect in every inch of his stature, his eyes dilating, and his hand extended, as though,—even like a glorious landscape, rich in vine-clad mountains and grassy meadows, smiling in the sun,—he beheld his future stretch clear and bold before him.

"Harry, I have given you my hand for the last time," he said, in a significant voice.

A piece of paper, carefully folded and worn by time, slipped from the letter which he held. Randolph seized it eagerly, and opening it, beheld a few lines traced in a handwriting which had long become historical. It was dated many years back, and was addressed to Colonel Rawdon.

"MY ESTEEMED FRIEND:—

"I am glad to hear the girl, HERODIA, whom, many years ago, I placed in your care, (acquainting you with the circumstances of her birth and paternity,) progresses toward womanhood, rich in education, accomplishments and personal loveliness. While nominally your slave, you have treated her as a daughter,—accept her father's heartfelt gratitude. In consequence of her descent, on her mother's side, she cannot (with safety to herself) be formally manumitted, nor can she be publicly recognized as the equal of your own daughter, or the associate of ladies of the white race. But it is my last charge to you, that she be honorably (even although secretly) married; and that the inclosed sealed packet which I send to you, be given to her eldest son, in case a son is born to her. That packet contains matters which, carried into action by such a son, would do much, yes, everything, to establish the happiness

of all the races on this continent. Kiss for me, that dear daughter of mine, whom, in this life, I shall never behold.

"Yours, with respect and gratitude,
"—————,"

A very touching,—an altogether significant letter.

Randolph pressed it to his lips in silence. Then inclosing it within his father's letter, he placed them both in a secret compartment of his trunk.

He seated himself, and folding his arms, gave himself up to the dominion of a crowd of thoughts, which flooded in upon his soul, like mingled sunshine and lightning through the window of a darkened room.

* * * * *

Bending over his trunk, he was examining, with an absent gaze, certain memorials of his old student brothers of Heidelberg. A small casket contained them all.

"This ring was given to me by poor Richmond, the English student. He was killed in a duel. And here is the watch of Van Brondt,—poor fellow! he died of consumption, even as his studies were completed, and a youth of poverty and hardship seemed about to be succeeded by a manhood of wealth and fame. And this,"—he took up a small vial, whose glass was incased in silver,—“this, Van Eichmer, the enthusiastic chemist, gave me. I wonder whether his dreams of fame, from the discovery embodied in this vial, will ever be realized? A rare liquid,—its powers rivaling the wonders of enchantment. He gave it to me under a solemn pledge not to subject it to chemical analysis, until he has time to mature his discovery, and make it known as the result of his own genius. He called it (somewhat after the fanciful fashion of the old alchemists) the ‘Dream-Elixir.’ I wonder if it has lost its virtues?”

Removing the buckskin covering which concealed the stopple, he then carefully drew the stopple, and applied the vial for a moment to his nostrils. The effect was as rapid as lightning. His face changed; his eyes grew wild and dreamy. His whole being was pervaded by an inexpressible rapture,—a rapture of calmness, (if we may thus speak) a rapture of unutterable repose. And like cloud-forms revealed by lightning, the

most gorgeous images swept before him. He seemed to have been suddenly caught up into the paradise of Mahomet, among fountains, showering upon beds of roses, and with the white-bosomed houris gliding to and fro.

In a word, the effect of the vial, applied but for an instant to his nostrils, threw into the shade all the wonders of opium, and rivaled in enchantment the maddening draught of oriental story,—*the Hashish*,—which the Old Man of the Mountain gave to his devotee Assassins,* intoxicating them with the odors of paradise, even as their hands were red with their victims' blood.

Like one awaking from a trance, Randolph slowly recovered from the effect of the Dream-Elixir, and once more saw the winter light shining through his window. The vial was in his hand,—he had taken the precaution to replace the stopple, the moment after he had applied it to his nostrils.

"It has lost none of its virtues. Held to the nostrils; or a few drops on a kerchief, applied to the mouth, its first effect is rapture; the second, rapture prolonged to delirium; its third, rapture that ends in death."

Randolph replaced the buckskin covering around the stopple of the vial, and then placed the vial in his vest pocket.

At this moment the door opened and the quiet Mr. Hicks entered the room, clad in his gray livery, turned up with black. He bowed and said,—

"Master, Mr. Lynn sends his compliments and desires to see you in the parlor."

"Tell Mr. Lynn that I will attend him presently," said Randolph rising from his knees.—“How is our patient, Mr. Hicks?”

"I left him asleep. He is very weak, though quite easy."

"Mr. Hicks, I desire that you will attend him throughout the day, or place him in the care of some trustworthy servant. If he asks for any one, send for me. Admit no one into his room,—you understand, he is a

* The order of the Assassins prevailed in Asia, in the days of the Crusades, and the history of their power and terrible influence is strangely connected with the history of the Knights Templars. The founder of the order, Hassan Sabah, rewarded his devotees for their deeds of murder, by a draught (called as above, the *HASHISH*,) whose powers of enchantment consoled them for a lifetime of hardship and danger.

dear friend of mine,"—he placed his finger on his forehead,—“a little touched here, and I do not wish his misfortune to be known, until all the means of recovery, which I have at my command, prove hopeless. Mr. Hicks, you will remember.”

“I will remember, and attend to your commands, master,” and Mr. Hicks bowed like an automaton.

“Have this trunk removed to Miss Royalton’s room,” said Randolph, and leaving Mr. Hicks, he descended to the parlor.

Through the rich curtains of the eastern and western windows of that magnificent apartment, the morning light was dimly shining. The lofty walls, the pictures, the statues, the carpet, the mirrors, all looked grand and luxurious in the softened light.

Bernard Lynn sat on the sofa, in the center of the parlor, his arms folded and his countenance troubled. As he raised his gaze and greeted Randolph, in a kindly although absent way, Randolph saw that his bronzed visage, (above which rose masses of snow-white hair) was traced with the lines of anxious thought, and his dark eyes were feverish with restlessness and care.

“Sit by me, Randolph,” he said in a serious voice, and he grasped Randolph’s hand and gazed earnestly in his face.—“I wish to speak with you. I have traveled much, Randolph, and when matters press heavily on my mind, I am a blunt man,—I use few words. I desire you to give all imaginable emphasis to what I am about to say.

Randolph took his hand and met his gaze; but he felt troubled and perplexed at Bernard Lynn’s words and manner.

“Briefly, then, Randolph,—when can you leave the city?”

Without knowing how the words came to his lips, Randolph replied,—“The day after to-morrow.”

“Can you go with us, by steamer, to Charleston? I wish to visit the scene,—” he paused as if unable to proceed,—“the scene,—you understand me? And then, after a week’s delay, we will go to Havana and spend the winter there. Will you go with us?”

It is impossible to describe the emotions which these words aroused. Hopes, fears, a picture of his father’s home, the conscious-

ness there was a taint upon his blood,—all whirled like lightning through his brain. But he did not stop to analyze his thoughts, but answered again,—as though the word was given to him,—in a single word, earnest in tone, and with a hearty grasp,—

“Willingly,” he said.

A ray of pleasure flitted over the bronzed face of Bernard Lynn. But in an instant he was sad and earnest again. “Randolph, I have been thinking, and most seriously,—I beg you to listen to the result of my thoughts. Nay, not a word,—fewest words are best, and a plain answer to a plain question will decide all.—I have been thinking of the desolate condition in which Eleanor will be left, in case her father is suddenly taken away. She will need a friend, a protector, a husband.”

He paused; Randolph, all agitation, awaited his next word in breathless suspense.

“I have long known her feelings,—she tells me that she knows yours. You are aware of my fortune and position,—I am aware of yours. Plainly, then, do you love her,—do you desire her hand?”

For a moment Randolph could not reply.

“O, my dearest friend, can you ask it?” he exclaimed, taking both hands of Mr. Lynn in his own,—“Do I desire Eleanor’s hand? It is the only wish of my life,—”

“Enough, my friend, enough,” replied Bernard, as a tear stole down his cheek. “In serious matters, I am a man of few words,—I fear that I may be suddenly taken away—I feel that there is no use of delay. Shall it take place this evening in your house?”

Randolph could only reply by a silent grasp of the hand.

“In presence of your sister, myself and the clergyman? And then, the day after to-morrow we leave for Charleston —”

“You speak the dearest wish of my soul,” was all that Randolph could reply.

Bernard Lynn arose,—“I will go out and buy a bridal present for my child,” he said, “and your sister and myself will take charge of all the details of the marriage. God bless you, my boy! What a load is lifted from my heart!”

How over his bronzed visage, a look cor-

dial and joyous as the spring sunshine played, even while there were tears in his eyes!

Randolph felt his heart swell with rapture, but instantly, —growing pale as death, —he rose, and resolved to make a revelation, which would blast all his hopes to ashes.

"I will not deceive this good old man. I will tell him my real condition, tell him that there is the blood of the accursed race in my veins."

This was his thought, and feeling like a criminal on the scaffold, he prepared to fulfill it,—

"Ah, you and I are agreed," cried Bernard, with his usual jovial laugh.—"but you must ask this child what she says of the matter," and dropping Randolph's hand, he hurried from the room.

Even as the first word of the confession was on his lip, Randolph beheld Eleanor, who had entered unperceived, standing between him and the light, on the very spot which her father had just left.

She looked very beautiful.

Clad in a dark dress, which, fitting closely to her arms and bust, and flowing in rich folds, around her womanly proportions, from the waist to the feet, she stood before him, one finger raised to her lip, her eyes fixed upon him in a gaze, full of deep and passionate light. Her face was cast into faint shadow, by her hair, which was disposed about it, in brown and wavy masses. But through the shadow her eyes shone with deep and passionate light.

A very beautiful woman, now unable to utter a word, as with heaving breast, she confronts the man whom she knows is destined to be her husband.

Why does all thought of confession fade from Randolph's mind?

O, the atmosphere of the presence of a pure, and beautiful woman, whose eyes gleam upon you with passionate love, carries with it an enchantment, which makes you forget the whole universe, — everything,—save that she is before you, that she loves you, that your soul is chained to her eyes.

Randolph silently stretched forth his arms. She came to him, and laid her arms about his neck, her bosom upon his breast.

"My wife!" he whispered.

And she raised her face, until their lips

and their eyes, met at once, whispering —
"My husband."

* * * * *

Certainly, this was a happy day for Randolph Royaltou.

Talk of opium, *hashish*, dream-elixir! Talk of their enchantment, and of the Mahomet's paradise which they create! What enchantment can rival the pressure of a pure woman's lips, which breathe softly, "husband!" as she lays them against your own?

But at least a dozen gentlemen who have divorce cases on hand, will curse me bitterly for writing the last sentence. And all the old bachelors who, having never known the kiss of a pure wife, or any wife at all, and having grown musty in their sins, will turn away with an "umph!" and an oath. And all the young libertines, who, deriving their opinion of women, merely from the unfaithful wives, and abandoned creatures with whom they have herded, and having expended even before the day of young manhood, every healthy throb, in shameless excess, they, too, will expand their faded eyes, and curl their colorless lips, at the very mention of "a pure woman," much less, a "pure woman's kiss." The "fast," the very "fast" boys!

But there are some who will not utterly dislike the allusion to a pure woman, or a pure woman's kiss.

That quiet sort of people who, having no divorce cases on hand, know that there are such things as pure women in the world, and know that a good wife, carries about her an atmosphere of goodness, that brings heaven itself down to the home.

And you, old bachelor,—a word in your ear,—if you only knew the experience of returning from a long journey late at night,—of stealing quietly into a home, your own home, up the dark stairs, and into a room, where a single light is shining near a bed,—of seeing there, blooming on the white pillow, the face of a pure wife, your own wife, rosy with sleep, and with her dark hair peeping out from her night-cap —, why, old bachelor, if you had only an idea of this kind of experience, you'd curse yourself for not getting married some forty years ago!—

* * * * *

The day passed quickly and happily, in quiet preparation for the bridal ceremony.

* * * * *

Eleanor was seated in a rocking-chair, her feet crossed and resting on a stool, her head thrown back, and her dark hair resting partly on her bared shoulders, partly on the arm of Esther, who stood behind her. The beams of the declining sun came softened through the window-curtains, and lit up the scene with mild, subdued light. It was a beautiful picture. There stood Esther, the matured woman, rich in every charm of voluptuous and stately beauty; and her gaze, softened by her long eyelashes, was tenderly fixed upon the upturned countenance of Eleanor, — a countenance radiant with youth, with abounding life, with passionate love. The habit of dark green cloth which Esther wore, contrasted with the robe of white muslin which enveloped Eleanor, its flowing folds girdled lightly about her waist and its snowy whiteness, half hidden by her unbound hair; for that hair which was soft brown in the sunlight and black in the shadow, fell in copious waves over her neck, her bosom, and below her waist. Eleanor was beautiful, Esther was beautiful, but their loveliness was of contrasted types; you could not precisely define how they differed; you only saw that they were beautiful, and that the loveliness of one, set off and added to, the charms of the other.

And as Esther was arranging the hair of the bride, for the marriage ceremony, they conversed in low tones:

"O, we shall all be so happy!" said Eleanor — "the climate of Havanna, is as soft and bland as Italy, and it will be so delightful to leave this dreary sky, this atmosphere all storm and snow, for a land where summer never knows an end, and where every breeze is loaded with the breath of flowers!"

Esther was about to reply, but Eleanor continued, — and her words drove the life-blood from Esther's cheek.

"And on our way we will stop at the old mansion of Hill Royal, the home of Randolph's ancestors. How I shall delight to wander with you through those fine old rooms, where the associations of the past meet you at every step! Do you know,

Esther, that I am a great aristocrat, — I believe in race, in blood, — in the perpetuation of the same qualities, either good or evil, from generation to generation? Look at Randolph, at yourself, for instance, — your look, your walk, every accent tell the story of a proud, a noble ancestry?"

"Or, look at yourself," was all that Esther could say, as she bent over the happy bride, thus hiding her face, — grown suddenly pale, — from the light. "Shall I tell her all?" the thought flashed over her, as she wound her hands through the rich meshes of Eleanor's hair, — "shall I tell this beautiful girl, who is as proud as she is beautiful, that in the veins of her husband there is — negro blood?"

But the very thought of such a revelation appalled her.

"Better leave it to the future," she thought, and then said aloud, "Tell me, Eleanor, something about Italy."

And while Esther, with sisterly hands, arrayed her for the bridal, the proud and happy bride, whose every vein swelled with abounding life and love, spoke of Italy, — of its skies and its monuments, — of the hour when she first met Randolph, and also of the moment when, amid the Appenines, he saved her life, her honor.

"O, sister, do you think that a love like ours can ever know the shadow of change?"

Happy Eleanor!

* * * * *

Meanwhile Randolph, standing by the parlor window apparently gazing upon the current of life which whirled madly along Broadway, in the light of the declining day, was in reality abstracted from all external existence, and buried in his own thoughts, — thoughts delicious and enchanting. Was there no phantom in the background, to cast its fatal shadow over the rich landscape which rose before his mental eye?

He was attired for the marriage ceremony, in a severely plain costume, which well became his thoughtful face and manly frame, — black dress coat, vest of white Marseilles, open collar and black neckerchief. As he stood there, noble-featured, broad-browed, his clear blue eyes and dark hair, contrasting with his complexion whose extreme pallor indicated by no means either lack of health

or vigor, who would have thought that there was—negro blood in his veins?

"In an hour Eleanor will be my wife!" he muttered, and his brow grew clouded and thoughtful, even while his eyes were filled with passionate light. "But there is no use of reflecting now. I must leave that fatal disclosure, with all its chances and consequences, to the future. Eleanor will be my wife, come what will."

His meditations were interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Hicks, who wore his usual imperturbable look, which seemed as much a part of him as his livery of gray turned up with black.

"How has our *patient* been since I left him an hour ago?" asked Randolph.

"He is no longer delirious," answered Mr. Hicks. "About a half an hour ago, he asked me the time of day, in a tone, and with a look, that showed that he had come to his senses."

"You conversed with him?"

"No, sir. He fell into a quiet sleep, and I left him in charge of a faithful servant. Don't you think we had better change the bandages on his back, after awhile? He has been sadly abused——"

"And I came to the scene of conflict just in time to save his life, and bear him to my home,—I will see him at once, and then tell you when to dress his wounds."

He moved toward the door.

"Has Mr. Lynn returned?" he said, turning his head over his shoulder.

"About half an hour since, he went up stairs to his room," returned Mr. Hicks.

Randolph left the parlor and hastened toward his own chamber, determined to make one more effort to change the hard nature, the unrelenting hatred of his brother. As he passed along the corridor, conscious that the most important crisis, if not the all-important crisis, of his life was near, his thoughts mingling the image of Eleanor with the proud memory of his lineage on the father's side, were intense and all-absorbing. For the time he forgot the taint in his blood.

He arrived before the door of the chamber in which his brother lay. It was near the foot of a broad staircase which, thickly carpeted, and with bannisters of walnut, darkened by time, was illumined by light

from the skylight far above. The door of the chamber was slightly open,—Randolph started, for he heard his brother's voice, speaking in rapid, impetuous tones. And the next instant, the voice of Bernard Lynn, hoarse with anger. Randolph, with his step upon the threshold, drew back and listened.

He did not pause to ask himself how Bernard Lynn came to be a visitor in the chamber of his brother,—he only listened to their voices,—with all his soul, he tried to distinguish their words.

It was the moment of his life. It required a terrible exertion of will, to suppress the cry of despair which rose to his lips.

"A negro!" he heard the voice of Bernard Lynn, hoarse with rage,—“and to my daughter! Never!”

And then the voice of Harry Royaltan, whose life he had spared and saved,—“I heard of this marriage from one of the servants, and felt it my duty to set you on your guard. Therefore, I sent for you. I can give you proof,—proof that will sink the slave into the earth.”

Once more the voice of Bernard Lynn,—“A negro! and about to marry him to my daughter! A negro!”

There was the hatred of a whole life embodied in the way he pronounced that word,—“a negro!”

Randolph laid his hand against the wall, and his head sank on his breast. He was completely unnerved.

The hopes of his life were ashes.

Once more, with a terrible exertion, he rallied himself, and with the thought,—“There remains, at least, revenge!”—he advanced toward the threshold.

But there was a footstep on the stair. Turning, Randolph beheld Eleanor, who was slowly descending the stairs. She was clad in her bridal dress. The light shone full upon her; she was radiantly beautiful. She wore a robe of snow-white satin, girdled lightly to her waist by a string of pearls, and over this a robe of green velvet, veined with flowers of gold, and open in front from her bosom to her feet. Her hair was disposed in rich masses about her face, and from its glossy blackness, and from the pure white of her forehead, a circlet of diamonds shone dazzlingly in the light. She saw Randolph,

and her eyes spoke although her lips were silent.

That moment decided her fate and his own.

As she was halfway down the stairs, he sprang to meet her.

"Randolph! how pale you are," and she started as she saw his face.

"Dearest, I must speak with you a moment," he whispered.—"To the library."

He took her by the hand and led her up the stairs, and along a corridor; she noticed that his hand was hot and cold by turns, and she began to tremble in sympathy with his agitation.

They came to the door of the library. The lock was turned from the outside by a key, but when the door was closed it locked itself. Randolph found the key in the lock; he turned it; the door opened; he placed the key in his pocket; they crossed the threshold. The door closed behind them, and was locked at once. Eleanor was ignorant of this fact.

The library was a spacious apartment, with two windows opening to the east, and a ceiling which resembled a dome. The light came dimly through the closed curtains, but a wood-fire, smouldering on the broad hearth, which now flamed up, and as suddenly died away, served to disclose the high walls, lined with shelves, the table in the center overspread with books and papers, and the picture above the mantle, framed in dark wood. Two antique arm-chairs stood beside the table; there was a sofa between the windows, and in each corner of the room, a statue was placed on a pedestal. The shelves were crowded with huge volumes, whose gilt bindings, though faded by time, glittered in the uncertain light. Altogether, as the light now flashed up and died away again, it was an apartment reminding you of old times,—of ghosts and specters, may be,—but of anything save the present century.

"What a ghost-like place!" said Eleanor.

Randolph led her in silence to the sofa, and seated himself by her side.

"Eleanor, I am sadly troubled. I have just received a letter which informs me of a sad disaster which has happened to a friend,—a friend whom I have known from boyhood."

Eleanor took his hand. As the light

flashed up for an instant, she was startled at the sight of his face.

"Compose yourself, Randolph," she said, kindly.—"The news may not be so disastrous as you think."

"I will tell you the story in a few words," and he took her hand as he continued: "A month ago, I left my friend in Charleston. Young, reputed to be wealthy, certainly connected with one of the first families of South Carolina, he was engaged in marriage to a beautiful girl,—one of the most beautiful that sun ever shone upon,—" he paused,— "as beautiful, Eleanor, as yourself."

And he fixed his ardent gaze upon that face which the soft shadow, broken now and then by the uncertain light, invested with new loveliness.

Eleanor made no reply in words; but her eyes met those of her plighted husband.

"The day was fixed for their marriage,—they looked forward to it with all the anticipations of a pure and holy love. It came,—the bride and bridegroom stood before the altar, in presence of the wedding-guests,—the priest began the ceremony, when a revelation was made which caused the bride to fall like one dead at the feet of her abashed and despair-stricken lover."

"This was, indeed, strange," whispered Eleanor, profoundly interested; "and this revelation?"

Randolph drew her nearer to him; his eyes grew deeper in their light, as in a voice, that grew lower at every word, he continued,

"The bridegroom was, indeed, connected with one of the first families in the State, but even as the priest began the ceremony, a voice from among the guests pronounced these words, 'Shame! shame! a woman so beautiful to marry a man who has negro blood in his veins!'"

"And these words,—they were not true?" eagerly asked Eleanor, resting her hand on Randolph's arm.

"They were true," answered Randolph. "It was their fatal truth which caused the bride to fall like a corpse, and covered the face of the bridegroom with shame and despair."

Eleanor's bosom heaved above the edge of her bridal robe; her lips curled with scorn; "And knowing this fatal truth, this lover

sought her hand in marriage? O, shame! shame!"

"But hear the sequel of the story," Randolph continued, and well it was for him, at that instant, that no sudden glow from the hearth lit up his livid and corrugated face,— "What, think you, was the course of the plighted wife, when she came to her senses?"

"She spurned from her side this unworthy lover,—she crushed every thought of love—"

"No, dearest, no! Even in the presence of her father and the wedding-guests, she took the bridegroom by the hand, and although her face was pale as death, said, with a firm eye and unfaltering voice, 'Behold my husband! As heaven is above us, I will wed none but him!'"

"O, base and shameless! base and shameless!" cried Eleanor, the scorn of her tone and of her look beyond all power of words,— "to speak thus, and take by the hand a man whose veins were polluted by the blood of a thrice accursed race!"

Randolph raised his hand to his forehead; what thoughts were burning there, need not be told. Shading his eyes, he saw Eleanor before him, beautiful and voluptuous, in her bridal robe, her bosom swelling into view; but with unmeasured scorn in the curve of her proud lip, in the lightning glance of her eyes.

And after that gaze, he said in a low voice, the fatal words,—

"Eleanor, what would you say, were I to inform you, that my veins are also polluted by the blood of this thrice accursed race?"

She did not utter a cry; she did not shriek; but starting from the sofa, and resting for support one hand against the wall, she turned to him her horror-stricken face, uttering a single word,— "You?"

"That I, descended from one of the first families of Carolina, on my father's side, am on the mother's side, connected with the accursed race?"

"You, Randolph, you!"

"That knowing this, I fled from Florence, when first I won your love; but to-day, dazzled by your beauty, mad with love of the very atmosphere in which you breathe, I forgot the taint in my blood, I saw our

marriage hour draw nigh, with heaven itself in my heart—"

"O, my God, why can I not die?"

"That even now your father knows the fatal secret, and breathes curses upon me, as he pronounces my name; resolves, that you shall die by his hand, ere you become my wife—"

She saw his face, by the sudden light,— it was impressed by a mortal agony. And although the room seemed to swim around, and her knees bent under her, she rallied her fast-fading strength, and advanced toward him, but with tottering steps.

"You are either mad, or you wish to drive me mad," she said, and laid her hand upon his shoulder,— "there is no taint upon your blood! The thought is idle. You, so noble browed, with the look, the voice, the soul of a man of genius,—you, that I love so madly,—you, one of the accursed race? No, Randolph, this is but a cruel jest—"

Her eyes looked all the brighter for the pallor of her face, as she bent over him, and her hair, escaping from the diamond circlet, fell over his face and shoulders like a veil.

He drew her to him, and buried his face upon her bosom,— "Eleanor! Eleanor," he groaned in very bitterness of spirit, as that bosom beat against his fevered brow, and that flowing hair shut him in its glossy waves,— "It is no jest. I swear it. But you will yet be mine! Will you not, Eleanor,—in spite of everything,—spite of the taint in my blood, spite of your father's wrath—"

As with the last effort of her expiring strength, she raised his head from her bosom, tore herself from his arms, and stood before him, her hair streaming back from her pallid face, while her right hand was lifted to heaven—

"It is true, then?" and her eyes wore that look, which revealed all the pride of her nature,— "you are then, one of that accursed race," she paused, unable to proceed, and stood there with both hands upon her forehead. "If I ever wed you, may my mother's curse—"

Randolph rose, the anguish which had stamped his face, suddenly succeeded by a look which we care not to analyze,—a look which gave a glow to his pale cheek, a wild.

gleam to his eyes. "You are faint, my love," he said, "this will revive you."

Seizing her by the waist, he placed her kerchief upon her mouth,—a kerchief which he had raised from the floor, and moistened with liquid from the silver vial which he carried in his vest pocket.

"Away! Your touch is pollution!" she cried, struggling in his embrace, but the effect of the liquid was instantaneous. Even as she struggled her powers of resistance failed, and the images of a delicious dream, seemed to pass before her, in soft and rosy light.

The tall wax candles were lighted in the parlor, and upon a table covered with a cloth of white velvet was placed a bible and a wreath of flowers.

It was the hour of sunset, but the closed curtains shut out the light of the declining day, and the light of the wax candles disclosed the spacious apartment, its pictures, statues and luxurious furniture. It was the hour of the bridal.

Two persons were seated near each other on one of the sofas. The preacher who had been summoned to celebrate the marriage,—a grave, demure man, with a sad face and iron-gray hair. Of course he wore black clothes and a white cravat. Esther arrayed in snow-white, as the bridesmaid,—white flowers in her dark hair, and her bosom heaving dimly beneath lace which reminded you of a flake of new-fallen snow.

They were waiting for the father, the bridegroom, and the bride.

"It will be a happy marriage, I doubt not," said the preacher, who had been gazing out of the corners of his eyes, at the beautiful Esther, and who felt embarrassed by the long silence.

But ere Esther could reply, the door was flung abruptly open, and Bernard Lynn strode into the room. His hat was in his hand; his cloak hung on his arm. His face was flushed; his brow clouded. Not seeming to notice the presence of Esther, he advanced to the clergyman,—

"Your services will not be needed, sir," he said, with a polite bow, but with flashing eyes. "This marriage will not take place."

Esther started to her feet, in complete astonishment.

Turning to Mr. Hicks, who had followed him into the room, Bernard Lynn continued, as he flung his cloak over his shoulders, and drew on his gloves,—

"Has the carriage come?"

"Yes, sir,—"

"Are our trunks on behind?"

"Yes, sir,—"

"Have you called my daughter, and told her that I desired her to put on her bonnet and cloak, and come to me at once?"

"I have sent one of the maids up to her room," said Mr. Hicks, whose countenance manifested no small degree of astonishment, "but your daughter is not in her room."

Mr. Lynn turned his flushed face and clouded brow to Esther,—

"Perhaps you will tell my daughter," he said, with an air of insolent *hauteur* as though speaking to a servant,—"that I desire her to put on her things and leave this house with me, immediately—"

How changed his manner, from the kind and paternal tone, in which he had addressed her an hour before!

Esther keenly felt the change, and with her woman's intuition, divined that a revelation of the fatal truth had been made. Disguising her emotion, she said, calmly,—

"You will direct one of the servants to do your bidding. Your daughter is doubtless in the library. I saw her going there, with Randolph, only a few minutes since,—"

At the name of Randolph, all the rage which shook the muscular frame of Bernard Lynn, and which he had but illy suppressed, burst forth unrestrained.

"What!" he shouted, "with Randolph! The negro! The negro! The slave!"

"With Randolph, her plighted husband," calmly responded Esther.

"Negress!" sneered Bernard Lynn, almost beside himself, "where is my daughter? Will no one call her?"

"Eleanor is coming," said a low deep voice, and Randolph stood before the enraged father. He was ashy pale, but there was a light in his eyes which can be called by no other name than—infernal.

Even Esther, uttered a cry as she beheld her brother's face.

"Negro!" muttered Bernard Lynn, regarding Randolph in profound contempt.

"Well?" Randolph folded his arms, and steadily returned his gaze.

"I have learned the secret in time, sir, in time," continued Bernard Lynn, "I am about to leave this house—"

"Well?" again exclaimed Randolph.

"I have saved her from this horrible match,—"

"Well?" for the third time replied Randolph, in complete *nonchalance*, and yet with that infernal light in his eyes.

A step was heard. Can this be Eleanor, who comes across the threshold, her dress torn, her bosom bared, her disheveled hair floating about that face which seems to have been touched by the hand of death?

Her hands clasped, her eyes downcast, she came on, with unsteady step, and sank at her father's feet. She did not once raise her eyes, but clasped his knees and buried her face on her bosom.

"Eleanor! Eleanor!" cried Bernard Lynn, "what does all this mean, my child?" and he sought to raise her from the floor, but she resisted him, and clutched his knees.

"It means that the honor of your daughter was saved once in Italy, by Randolph Royalton,—she was grateful, and would have manifested her gratitude by giving him her hand in marriage, but she could not do that, for there was—*negro blood* in his veins. So, as she could not marry him, she showed her gratitude in the only way left her,—by the gift of her person without marriage."

As in a tone of Satanic triumph, Randolph pronounced these words, a silence like death fell upon the scene.

Bernard Lynn stood for a moment paralyzed; but Esther came forward with flashing eyes,—"*O, you miserable coward!*" she cried, and with her clenched hand struck her brother,—struck Randolph on the forehead.

And turning away from him in scorn, she raised Eleanor in her arms.

Ere he could recover from the surprise which this blow caused him, Bernard Lynn reached forward, his hands clenched, his dark face purple with rage.

"Wretch! for this you shall die,"—and crushed by the very violence of his rage, his agony, he sank insensible at Randolph's feet.

"Our marriage ceremony is postponed for the present,—good evening, sir!" said Randolph, turning to the preacher, who had witnessed this scene in speechless astonishment. "Mr. Hicks, take care of my friend, Lynn, here, and have him put to bed; and you, Esther, take care of Eleanor: and as for myself,"—he turned his back upon them all, and left the room,—"*I think I will go and see my dear brother.*"

Up-stairs, with the tortures of the damned in his heart,—up-stairs, with the infernal light in his eyes,—a moment's pause at the door of his brother's room,—and then he flings it open and enters.

Harry Royalton, sitting up in bed, his back against the pillows, was reading, by a lamp, which stood on a small table, by the bedside. He was reading the parchment, addressed to his father, as one of the seven. The light shone on his face, now changed from its usual robust hue, to a sickly pallor, as with his large bulging eyes, fixed upon the parchment, he quietly smoked a cigar, and by turns passed his hands over his bushy whiskers and through his thick curling hair. Weak from pain and loss of blood, he still enjoyed his cigar. There was a pleasant complacency about his lips. To-morrow was the twenty-fifth of December, and to-day—he had foiled all the plans of his slave brother. Harry was satisfied with himself. The smoke of the Havanna floated round him and among the curtains of the bed. It was, take it all in all, a picture.

It was in this moment of quiet complacency, that Randolph appeared upon the scene. Harry looked up,—he caught the glare of his eyes,—and at once looked about him for a bowie-knife or pistol. But there were no weapons near. With a cry for help, Harry sprang from the bed, clad as he was, only in his shirt and drawers. He cried for help, but only once, for ere he could utter a second cry, there was a hand upon his throat.

"I'm not a brother now,—only a slave,—it was as a brother, last night, I spared and saved you,—now I'm only a slave, a negro! But as a slave and negro, I am choking you to death!"

Harry might as well have battled with a thunderbolt. Randolph, with the madman's

fire in his eyes, bears him to the floor, puts his knee upon his breast, and tightens his clutch upon his throat. And as a gurgling noise sounded in the throat of the poor wretch, Randolph bent his face nearer to him, and (to use an all-expressive Scotch word) *glowered* upon him with those mad-man's eyes.

"This time there must be no mistake, brother. The world is large enough for many millions of people, but not large enough for us two. You must go, Harry,—*master!* You are going! Go and tell your father and mine how you treated the children of Herodia! Go!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE BRIDALS OF JOANNA AND BEVERLY.

It was the night of December the twenty-fifth, 1844.

The mansion of Eugene Livingstone was dark as a tomb. The shutters were closed, and crape fluttered on the door.

Within,—in the range of parlors, where, last night, Eugene kissed good-bye on the lips of his young and beautiful wife, ere he left for Boston,—where, not an hour after, Beverly Barron came and folded the young wife to his breast, ere he bore her from her home to a haunt of shame,—within a single light is burning. One light alone, in the vast mansion, from foundation to roof.

It is a wax candle, placed in the front parlor, on a marble table, between a sofa and mirror, which reaches from the ceiling to the floor.

Joanna is sitting there alone, her golden hair neatly arranged about her *blonde* face; her noble form clad in a flowing robe of snowy whiteness. She is very beautiful. True, her face is very pale, but her lips are red and a flush burns on each cheek. True, beneath each eye a faint blue circle may be traced, but the eyes themselves, blue as a cloudless sky in June, shine with an intensity that almost changes their hue into black in the soft, luxurious light. Joanna is very beautiful,—a woman of commanding form and voluptuous bust,—the loose robe which she wears, by its flowing folds, gives a new charm, a more fascinating loveliness to every detail of her figure.

Holding the evening paper in her right hand, she beats the carpet somewhat impatiently with her satin-slipped foot.

Her eye rests upon a paragraph in the evening paper:—

"AFFAIR IN HIGH LIFE.—There was a rumor about town, to-day, of an affair of honor in high life—among the 'upper ten,'—the truth of which, at the hour of going to press, we are not able, definitely, to ascertain. The parties named are the elegant and distinguished B——y B——n, and E——e L——ng——e, a well-known member of the old aristocracy, in the upper region of the city. A domestic difficulty is assigned as the cause; and one of the parties is stated to have been severely, if not mortally, wounded. By to-morrow we hope to be able to give the full particulars."

Joanna read this paragraph, and her glance dropped, and she remained for a long time buried in deep thought.

"Will he come?" she said at length, as if thinking aloud.

The silence of the vast mansion was around her, but it did not seem to fill her with awe. She remained sitting on the sofa, the evening paper in her hand, and her face impressed with profound thought.

"Hark!" she ejaculated, as a faint noise was heard in the hall without. She started, but did not rise from the sofa.

The door opened stealthily, with scarcely a perceptible sound, and a man clad in a rough overcoat, with great white buttons, a cap drawn over his brow, and a red neckerchief wound about the collar of his coat, came silently into the room and approached Joanna.

"Who are you?" she cried, as if in alarm,—"Your business here?"

"Joanna, dearest Joanna," cried a familiar voice, "and has my disguise deceived you? It deceived the police, but I did not think that it could deceive you!"

The overcoat, cap and neckerchief were thrown aside, and in an instant Beverly Barron was kneeling at Joanna's feet. His tall and not ungraceful form clad in blue coat, with bright metal buttons, white vest, black pantaloons, and patent leather boots. He wore a diamond pin, and a heavy gold chain.

His whole appearance was that of a gentleman of leisure, dressed for the opera or a select evening party. His face was flushed, his eyes sparkling, and the flaxen curls which hung about his brow, emitted an odor of cologne or *patchouilli*.

"I had to come,—I could not stay away from you, dearest," he said, looking up passionately into her face. "All day long, I have dodged from place to place, determined to see you to-night or die."

She gave him her hand, and looking into the opposite mirror, saw that she was very pale, but still exceedingly beautiful.

"To risk so much for—my sake," she said, and threaded his curls with her delicate hand, and at the same time one of those smiles which set the blood on fire, animated her lips, and disclosed her white teeth.

"You are beautiful as an angel, I vow," exclaimed Beverly, and then glancing round the vast apartment,—“Are we all alone?” he asked.

"Yes, all alone," she replied, "the servants were discharged this morning,—all, save my maid, and she has retired by my orders."

"No danger of any one calling?"

"None."

"You are sure, dearest?"

"No one will call. You are safe, and we are alone, Beverly!" again that smile, and a sudden swell of the bosom.

"The body,—the body——"

"Is at my father, the general's,"—she replied to the question before it passed his lips.

"Then, indeed, dearest, we are alone, and we can talk of our future,—*our* future. We must come to a decision, Joanna, and soon."

And half raising himself, as she lowered her head, he pressed his kiss on her lips.

"O, I do so long to talk with you, Beverly," she murmured.

"To-morrow, dearest, I will be placed in possession of an immense fortune. You have heard of the Van Huyden estate?"

She made a sign in the affirmative.

"I am the heir of one-seventh of that immense estate. All the obstacles in the way of the seven heirs (as I was informed to-day) are removed. To-morrow the estate will be

divided; I will receive my portion without scarcely the chance of disappointment; and next day——"

He paused; she bent down until he felt her breath on his face,—“Next day?” she whispered.

"We will sail for Europe. A palace, in Florence, my love, or in Venice, or some delightful nook of Sicily, where, apart from the world, in an atmosphere like heaven, we can live for each other. What say you to this, Joanna?"

"But you forget," she faltered, "the recent circumstance,——" her face became flushed, and then deathly pale.

"Can you live under your father's eye after what has happened?" he whispered.—“Think of it,—he will loathe the sight of you, and make your life a hell!"

"He will indeed,"—and she dropped her head upon her proud bosom.

"And your brother,—does he not thirst for my blood?"

"Ah! does he?" she cried, with a look of alarm.

"And yet, Joanna, I was forced into it. I did all I could to avoid it. I even apologized on the ground, and offered to make reparation."

"You offered to make reparation?" she cried, "that was, indeed, noble!" and an indescribable smile lighted her features.

"Joanna, dear, I have suffered so much to-day, that I am really faint. A glass of that old Tokay, if you please, my love."

She answered him with a smile, and rising from the sofa, passed into the darkness of the second parlor, separated from the first by folding-doors.

"A magnificent woman, by Jove!" soliloquized Beverly, as he remarked her noble form.

After a few moments she appeared again, bearing a salver of solid gold, on which was placed a decanter and goblet, both of Bohemian glass,—rich scarlet in color, veined with flowers of purple, and blue, and gold.

Never had she seemed more beautiful than when standing before him, she presented the golden salver, with one of those smiles, which gave a deeper red to her lips, a softer brightness to her eyes.

He filled the capacious goblet to the brim—

for a moment regarded the wine through the delicate fabric, with its flowers of blue, and purple, and gold,—and then drained it at a draught.

"Ah!"—he smacked his lips,—“that is delicious!”

“Eugene’s father imported it some twenty years ago,” said Joanna, placing the salver on the table. “Come, Beverly, I want to talk with you.”

Following the bewitching gesture which she made with her half-lifted hand, Beverly rose, and gently wound his arm about her waist.

“Come, let us walk slowly up and down these rooms, now in light and now in darkness, and as we walk we can talk freely to each other.”

And they walked, side by side, over the carpet, through that splendid *suite* of rooms, where gorgeous furniture, pictures, statues, all spoke of luxury and wealth. Hand joined in hand, his arm about her waist, her head drooping to his shoulder, and her bosom throbbing near and nearer to his breast, they glided along; now coming near the light in the front room, and now passing into the shadows which invested the other rooms. It was a delightful, nay, an intoxicating *tete-a-tete*.

“I was thinking, this evening,” she said, as they passed from the light, “of the history of our love.”

“Ah, dearest!”

“It seems an age since we first met, and yet it’s only a year.”

“Only a year!” echoed Beverly, as they paused in a nook where a delicious twilight prevailed.

“Eugene presented you to me a year ago, as his dearest friend,—his most tried and trusted friend. Do you remember, Beverly?”

He drew her gently to him,—there was a kiss and an embrace.

“You discovered his infidelity. You brought me the letters written to him by the person in Boston, for whom he proved unfaithful to me. You brought them from time to time, and it was your sympathy with my wounded pride,—my trampled affection,—which consoled me and kept me alive. It was, Beverly.”

“O, you say so, dearest,” and as they

came into light again, he felt her breast throbbing nearer to his own.

For a moment they paused by the table, whereon the wax candle was burning, its flame reflected in the lofty mirror. Her face half-averted from the light, as her head drooped on his shoulder, she was exceedingly beautiful.

“Beverly,” she whispered, and placed her arm gently about his neck,—the touch thrilled him to the heart,—“you knew me, young, confiding, ignorant of the world. You took pity on my unsuspecting ignorance, and day by day, yes hour by hour, in these very rooms, you led me on, to see the full measure of my husband’s guilt, and at the same time led me to believe in you, and love you.”

She paused, and passed her hand gently among his flaxen curls.

“Ah, love, you are as good as you are beautiful!” he whispered.

“Before you spoke thus, I had no thought save of my duty to Eugene.”

“Eugene, who betrayed you!”

“Yes, to Eugene, who betrayed me, and to my child. After you spoke, I saw life in a new light. The world did not seem to me, any longer, to be the scene of dull quiet home-like duty, but of pleasure,—mad, passionate pleasure,—may be, illicit pleasure, purchased at any cost. And letter after letter which you brought me, accompanied by proof which I could not doubt, only served to complete the work,—to wean me from my idol,—false, false idol, Eugene,—and to teach me that this world was not so much made for dull every-day duty, as for those pleasures which, scorning the laws of the common herd, develop into active life every throb of enjoyment of which we are capable.”

“Yes, yes, love,” interrupted Beverly, pressing his lips to hers.

“And thus matters wore on, until you brought me the last, the damning letter. He was going to Boston to see his dying brother,—so he pretended,—but in reality to see the woman for whom he had proved faithless to me. When you brought me this letter I was mad,—mad,—O, Beverly—”

“It was enough to drive you mad!”

“And yesterday, impelled by some vague

idea of revenge, I consented to go with you to a place, where, as you said, we would see something of the world,—where, in the excitement of a masked ball, I might forget my husband's faithlessness, and at the same time show that I did not care for his authority. Some idea of this kind was in my mind, and last night when he kissed me, and so coolly lied to me, before his departure, O, then Beverly, then, I was cut to the quick. You came after he had gone, and,—and—I went with you—”

“You did dearest Joanna,” said Beverly, pressing her closer to his side.

They passed from the light into the shadows together.

“And there, you know what happened there,” she said, as they stood in the darkness. She clung nearer and nearer to him. “But you know, Beverly, you know, that it was not until my senses were maddened by wine,” her voice grew low and lower,—“that I gave my person to you.”

In the darkness she laid her head upon his breast, and put her arms about his neck, her bosom all the while throbbing madly against his chest.

“O, you know, that in the noble letters, which you wrote to me from time to time—letters breathing a pure spiritual atmosphere,—you spoke of your love for me as something far above all common loves, refined and purified, and separate from all thought of physical impurity. And yet,—and yet,—last night when half crazed by jealousy, I went with you to the place which you named, you took the moment, when my senses were completely delirious with wine, to treat me as though I had been your wife, as though you had been the father of my child.”

She sobbed aloud, and would have fallen to the floor had he not held her in his arms.

“O, Joanna, you vex yourself without cause,” he said, soothingly,—“I love you,—you know I love you—”

“O, but would it not be a dreadful thing, if you had been deceived in regard to these letters?”

“Deceived?”

“Suppose, for instance, some one had forged them, and imposed them upon you as veritable letters—”

“Forged? This is folly my love.”

“In that case, you and I would be guilty, O, guilty beyond power of redemption, and Eugene would be an infamously murdered man.”

“Dismiss these gloomy thoughts. The letters were true—”

“O, you are certain,—certain—”

“I swear it,—swear it by all I hold dear on earth or hope hereafter.”

“O, do not swear, Beverly. Who could doubt you?”

They passed toward the light again. She wiped the tears from her eyes—those eyes which shone all the brighter for the tears.

“And the day after to-morrow,” said Beverly, as he rested his hand upon her shoulder,—“we will leave for Italy—”

“You have been in Italy?” asked Joanna.

“O, yes dearest, and Italy is only another name for Eden,” he replied, growing warm, even eloquent—“there far removed from a cold, a heartless world, we will live, we will die together!”

“Would it not,” she said, in a low whisper, as with her hand on his shoulders and her bosom beating against his own, she looked up earnestly into his face, “O, would it not be well, could we but die at this moment,—die now, when our love is in its youngest and purest bloom,—die here on this cold earth, only to live again, and live with each other in a happier world?”

And in her emotion, she wound her arms convulsively about his neck and buried her face upon his breast.

“Dismiss these gloomy thoughts,”—he kissed her forehead—“there are many happy hours before us in this world, Joanna. Think not of death—”

“O, do you know, Beverly,” she raised her face,—it was radiant with loveliness—“that I love to think of death. Death, you know, is such a test of sincerity. Before it falsehood falls dumb and hypocrisy drops its mask—”

“Nay, nay you must dismiss these gloomy thoughts. You know I love you—you know—”

He did not complete the sentence, but they passed into the darkness again, his arms about her waist, her head upon his shoulder.

And there, in the gloom, he pressed her to his breast, and as she clung to his neck, whispered certain words, which died in murmurs on her ear.

"No, no, Beverly," she answered, in a voice, broken by emotion, "it cannot be. Consider—"

"Cannot be? And am I not all to you?" he said, impassionately,—"Yes, Joanna, it must be—"

There was a pause, only broken by low murmurs, and passionate kisses.

"Come then," she said, at last, "come, husband—"

Without another word, she took him by the hand, and led him from the room out into the darkened hall. Her hand trembled very much, as she led him through the darkness up the broad stairway. Then a door was opened and together they entered the bed-chamber.

It is the same as it was last night. Only instead of a taper a wax candle burns brightly before a mirror. The curtains still fall like snow-flakes along the lofty windows, the alabaster vase is still filled with flowers,—they are withered now,—and from the half-shadowed alcove, gleams the white bed, with curtains enfolding it in a snowy canopy.

Trembling, but beautiful beyond the power of words,—beautiful in the flush of her cheeks, the depth of her gaze, the passion of her parted lips,—beautiful in every motion of that bosom which heaved madly against the folds which only half-concealed it,—trembling, she led him toward the bed.

"My marriage bed," she whispered, and laid her hand upon the closed curtains.

Beverly was completely carried away by the sight of her passionate loveliness—"Once your marriage bed with a false husband," he said, and laid his hand also upon the closed curtains, "now your marriage bed with a true husband, who will love you until death—"

And he drew aside the curtains.

Drew aside the curtains, folding Joanna passionately to his breast, and,—fell back with a cry of horror. Fell back, all color gone from his face, his features distorted, his paralyzed hands extended above his head.

Joanna did not seem to share his terror for she burst into a fit of laughter.

"Our marriage bed, love," she said, "why are you so cold?" and again she laughed.

But Beverly could not move nor speak. His eyes were riveted to the bed.

Within the snowy curtains, was stretched a corpse, attired in the white garment of the grave. Through the parted curtains, the light shone fully on its livid face, while the body was enveloped in half shadow,—shone fully on the white forehead with its jet-black hair, upon the closed lids, and—upon the dark wound between the eyes. The agony of the last spasm was still upon that face, although the hands were folded tranquilly on the breast. Eugene Livingstone was sleeping upon his marriage bed,—sleeping, undisturbed by dreams.

Joanna stood there, holding the curtain with her uplifted hand, her eyes bright, her face flushed with unnatural excitement. Again she laughed loud and long—the echoes of her laughter sounded strangely in that marriage chamber.

"What,—what does this mean?" cried Beverly, at last finding words—"is this a dream—a—" He certainly was in a fearful fright, for he could not proceed.

"Why, so cold, love?" she said, smiling, "it is our marriage bed, you know—"

"Joanna, Joanna," he cried,—“are you mad?” and in his fright, he looked anxiously toward the door.

She took a package from her breast and flung it at his feet.

"Go," she cried, "but first take up your forged letters—"

"Forged letters?" he echoed.

"Forged letters," she answered,—her voice was changed,—her manner changed,—there was no longer any passion on her face,—pale as marble, her face rigid as death, she confronted him with a gaze that he dared not meet. "Go!" she cried, "but take with you your forged letters. Yes, the letters which you forged, and which you used as the means of my ruin. You have robbed me of my honor, robbed me of my husband,—your work is complete—go!"

Her face was white as the dress which she wore,—she pointed to the threshold.

"Joanna, Joanna," faltered Beverly.

"Not a word, not a word, villain, villain without remorse or shame! I am guilty,

and might excuse myself by pleading your treachery. But I make no excuse. But for you,—for you,—where is the excuse? You have dishonored the wife,—made the child fatherless,—your work is complete! Go!”

Beverly saw that all his schemes had been unraveled; conscious of his guilt, and conscious that everything was at an end between him and Joanna, he made a desperate attempt to rally his usual self-possession; or, perhaps, impudence would be the better word.

He moved to the door, and placed his hand upon the lock.

“Well, madam, as you will,” he said, and bowed. “Under the circumstances, I can only wish you a very good evening.”

He opened the door.

“Hold!” she cried in a voice that made him start.—“Your work is complete, but so, also, is mine—”

She paused; her look excited in him a strange curiosity for the completion of the sentence. “You will not long enjoy your triumph. You have not an hour to live. The wine which you drank was poisoned.”

Beverly’s heart died in him at these words. A strange fever in his veins, a strange throbbing at the temples, which he had felt for an hour past, and which he had attributed to the excitement resulting from the events of the day, he now felt again, and with redoubled force.

“No,—no,—it is not so,” he faltered.—“Woman, you are mad,—you had not the heart to do it.”

“Had not the heart?” again she burst into a loud laugh,—“O, no, I was but jesting. Look here,”—she darted to the bed, flung the curtain aside, and disclosed the lifeless form of her husband,—“and here!” gliding to another part of the room, she gently drew a cradle into light, and throwing its silken covering aside, disclosed the face of her sleeping child,—that cherub boy, who, as on the night previous, slept with his rosy cheek on his bent arm, and the ringlets of his auburn hair tangled about his forehead, white as alabaster. “And now look upon me!” she dilated before him like a beautiful fiend; “we are all before you,—the dead husband, the dishonored wife, the fatherless child,—and yet I had not the heart,”—she laughed again.

Beverly heard no more. Uttering a blasphemous oath, he rushed from the room.

And the babe, awakened by the sound of voices, opened its clear, innocent eyes, and reached forth its baby hands toward its mother.

Urged forward by an impulse like madness, Beverly entered the rooms on the first floor, seized the rough overcoat and threw it on, passing the red neckerchief around its collar, to conceal his face. Then drawing the cap over his eyes, he hurried from the house.

“It’s all nonsense,” he muttered, and descended the steps.—“I’ll walk it off.”

Walk it off! And yet the fever burned the more fiercely, his temples throbbed more madly, as he said the words. Leaving behind him the closed mansion of Eugene Livingstone, with the crape fluttering on the door, he bent his steps toward Broadway.

“I’m nervous,” he muttered.—“The words of that devilish hysterical woman have unsettled me. How cold it is!” He felt cold as ice for a moment, and the next instant his veins seemed filled with molten fire.

He hurried along the dark street toward Broadway. The distant lights at the end of the street, where it joined Broadway, seemed to dance and whirl as he gazed upon them; and his senses began to be bewildered.

“I’ve drank too much,” he muttered.—“If I can only reach Broadway, and get to my hotel, all will be right.”

But when he reached Broadway, it whirled before him like a great sea of human faces, carriages, houses and flame, all madly confused, and rolling through and over each other.

The crowd gave way before him, as he staggered along.

“He’s drunk,” cried one.

“Pitch into me that way ag’in, old feller, and I’ll hit you,” cried another.

It was Christmas Eve, and Broadway was alive with light and motion; the streets thronged with vehicles, and the sidewalks almost blocked up with men, and women, and children; the lamps lighted, and the shops and places of amusement illuminated, as if to welcome some great conqueror. But Beverly was unconscious of the external scene. His fashionable dress, concealed by his rough overcoat, and his face hidden by

his cap and red neckerchief, he staggered along, with his head down and his hands swaying from side to side. There was a roaring as of waves or of devouring flame in his ears. A red haze was before his eyes; and the scenes of his whole life came up to him at once, even as a drowning man sees all his life, in a focus, before the last struggle,—there were the persons he had known, the adventures he had experienced, the events of his boyhood, and the triumphs and shames of his libertine manhood,—all these came up to him, and confronted him as he hurried along. Three faces were always before him,—the dead face of Eugene, the pale visage of Joanna, her eyes flaming with vengeance, and,—the innocent countenance of his motherless daughter.

And thus he hurried along.

"Old fellow, the stars 'll be arter you," cried one in the crowd, through which he staggered on.

My eyes! aint he drunk?"

Don't he pay as much attention to one side o' the pavement as the tother?"

"Did you ever see sich worm fence as he lays out?"

There was something grotesquely horrible in the contrast between his real condition, and the view which the crowd took of it.

At length, not knowing whither he went, he turned from the glare and noise of Broadway into a by-street, and hurried onward,—onward, through the gloom, until he fell.

In a dark corner of the street, behind the Tombs, close to the stones of that gloomy pile, he fell, and lay there all night long, with no hand to aid him, no eye to pity him.

He was found, on Christmas morning, stiff and cold; his head resting against the wall of the Tombs, his body covered with new-fallen snow. A pile of bricks lay on one side of him, a heap of boards on the other. This was the death-couch of the dashing Beverly Barron!

How he died, no one could tell; it was supposed that he had poisoned himself from remorse at the death of Eugene Livingstone.

As Beverly hurried from the room, the babe in the cradle opened its clear, innocent eyes, and reached forth its baby hands toward its mother.

She took it, and stilled it to rest upon her bosom; and then came to the bed and sat down upon it, near her dead husband.

"Eugene, Eugene!" she gently put her hand upon his cold forehead,—“let me talk to you,—I will not wake you,—let me talk to you, as you sleep. I am guilty, Eugene, you know I am,—you cannot forgive me,—I do not ask forgiveness; but you'll let me be near you, Eugene? You will not spurn me from you? This is our child, Eugene,—don't you know him?—O, look up and speak to him. Don't,—don't be angry with him,—his mother is a poor, fallen, fallen thing, but don't be angry with our child!”

She did not weep. Her eyes, large and full of light, were fixed upon her husband's face. Cradling her babe upon her bosom, she sat there all night long, talking to Eugene, in a low, whispering voice, as though she wished him to hear her, and yet was afraid to awake him from a pleasant slumber. The light went out, but still she did not move. She was there at morning light, her baby sleeping on her breast, and her hand laid upon her dead husband's forehead.

And at early morning light, her father came,—the gray-haired man,—his face frowning, and his heart full of wrath against his daughter.

"What do you here?" he said, sternly. "This is no place for you. There is to be an inquest soon. You surely do not wish to look upon the ruin you have wrought?"

As though she was conscious of his presence, but had not heard his words, she turned her face over her shoulder,—that colorless face, lighted by eyes that still burned with undimmed luster,—and said,—

"Do you know, father, I have been talking with Eugene, and he has forgiven me!"

The voice, the look melted the old man's heart.

He fell upon the bed, and wept.

CHAPTER V.

AN EPISODE.

HERE, my friend, let us take a breathing spell in this, our dark history. Horrors crowd fast and thick upon us,—horrors, not born of romance, but of that under-current

of real life, which rolls on evermore, beneath the glare and uproar of the Empire City. We do not wish to write them down,—shudder sometimes and drop the pen as we describe them,—and ask ourselves, “Can these things really be? Is not the world all song and sunshine? Does that gilded mask which we call by the name of Civilization,—the civilization of the nineteenth century,—only hide the features of a corpse?” And the answer to these queries comes to us in the columns of every daily paper; in the record of every day’s farces and crimes; in the *unwritten* history of those masses, who, while we write, are slowly serving their apprenticeship of hardship and starvation, in order that at last they may inherit a grave.

Ah, it is the task of the author who writes a book, traversing a field so vast as is attempted in the present work, not to exaggerate, but to soften, the perpetual tragedies of every day. He dares not tell all the truth; he can only vaguely hint at those enormous evils which are the inevitable result,—not of totally depraved human nature, for such a thing never existed,—but of a social system, which, false alike to God and man, does perpetually tempt one portion of the human race with immense wealth, as it tempts another portion with immeasurable poverty.

But let us leave these dark scenes for a little while. Let us breathe where crime does not poison the air. It is June, and the trees are in full leaf, and through canopies of green leaves, the brooks are singing their summer song. Come out with me into the open country, where every fleeting cloud that turns its white bosom to the sun, as it skims along the blue, shall remind us, not of crime and blood, but of thankfulness to God, that summer is on the land, and that we are alive. Come,—without object, save to drink at some wayside spring,—without hope, other than to lose ourselves among the summer boughs,—let us take a stroll together.

Out in the country, near a dusty turnpike, and a straight, hot railroad track,—but we’ll leave the turnpike, which is well scattered with young gentlemen in high shirt-collars, who drink clouds of dust, and drive hired horses to death,—and we’ll leave the railroad where the steam engine, like a tired

devil, comes blowing and swearing, with red coals in its mouth, and a cloud of brimstone smoke about its head. We’ll climb the rails of yonder gray old fence, and get us straightway into the fields; not much have we to show you there. A narrow path winds among tangled bushes and clumps of dwarfed cedar trees; it shows us, here a grassy nook, hidden in shade, and there a rough old rock, projecting its bald head in the sun; and then it goes winding down and down, until you hear the singing of the brook. Where that brook comes from, you cannot tell; yonder it is hidden under a world of leaves; here it sinks from view under a bridge curiously made up of stone, and timber, and sod; a little to your right it comes into light, dashing over cool rocks and forming little lakes all over beds of smooth gray sand. Follow the path and cross the bridge; we stand in the shade of trees, that are scattered at irregular intervals, along the side of a hill. Here a willow near the brook, with rank grass about its trunks; there a poplar with a trunk like a Grecian column, and leaves like a canopy; and farther on, a mass of oaks, chestnuts, and maples, grouped together, their boughs mingling, and a thicket of bushes and vines around their trunks. So you see, we stand at the bottom of an amphitheater, one side of which is forest, the other low brushwood; beyond the brushwood, a distant glimpse of another forest, and in the center of the scene, the hidden brooklet singing its June-day song.

You look above, and the blue sky is set in an irregular frame of leaves,—leaves now shadowed by a cloud, and now dancing in the sun.

Let us stretch ourselves upon this level bit of sod, where all is shade and quiet, and—

Think? No, sir. Do not think that there is such a creature as a bad man, or a crime in the world. But drink the summer air,—drink the freshness of foliage and flowers,—lull yourself with the song of the brook,—look at the blue sky, and feel that there is a God, and that he is good.

You may depend you will feel better after it. If you don’t, why, it is clear that your mind is upon bank stock, or politics,—and there’s not much hope of you.

Thus, stretched in the shade, at the bottom of this leafy amphitheater, you’ll wrap

yourself in summer, and forget the world, which, beyond that wall of trees, is still at its old work,—swearing, lying, fretting, loving, hating, and rushing on all the while at steam-engine speed.

You won't care who's President, or who robbed the treasury of half a million dollars. You'll forget that there is a Pope who washed his hands in the blood of brave men and heroic women. You'll not be anxious about the rate of stock; whether money is tight or easy, shall not trouble you one jot. Thus resting quietly at the bottom of your amphitheater in the country, you'll feel that you are in the church of God, which has sky for roof, leaves for walls, grassy sod for floor, and for music,—hark! Did you ever hear organ or orchestra that could match *that*? The hum of bees, the bubble of brooks, the air rustling among the leaves, all woven together, in one dreamy hymn, that melts into your soul, and takes you up to heaven, quick as a sunbeam flies!

And when the sun goes behind the trees, and the dell is filled with broad gleams of golden light and deep masses of shade, you may watch the moon as she steals into sight, right over your head, in the very center of the glimpse of blue sky. You may hear the low murmur which tells you that the day's work is almost done, and that the solemn night has come to wrap you in her stillness.

And ere you leave the dell, just give one moment of thought to those you love, whose eyes are shut by the grave-yard sod,—think of them, not as dead, but as living and beautiful among those stars,—and then taking the path over the brook, turn your steps to the world again.

Hark! Here it comes on the steam-engine's roar and whistle,—that bustling, hating, fighting world, which, like the steam-engine, rushes onward, with hot coals at its heart, and a brimstone cloud above it.

UPPER-TEN AND LOWER MILLION.

PART SEVENTH.

THE DAY OF TWENTY-ONE YEARS.

DECEMBER 25, 1844.

CHAPTER I.

MARTIN FULMER APPEARS.

THE time was very near. The cycle of twenty-one years was in its last hour. It was the last hour of December twenty-fourth, 1844. That hour passed, the twenty-one years would be complete.

Darkness and storm were upon the Empire City. The snow fell fast, and the wind, howling over the river and the roofs, made mournful music among the arches of unfinished Trinity Church. In the gloom, amid the falling snow, four persons stood around the family vault of the Van Huydens. Even had the storm and darkness failed to cover them from observation, they would have been defended from all prying eyes, by the crape masks which they wore. The marble slab bearing the name of "VAN HUYDEN," was thrust aside, and from the gloom of the vault beneath, the coffin was slowly raised into view; the coffin which was inscribed with the name of Gulian Van Huyden, and with the all-significant dates, December 25th, 1823, and December 25th, 1844.

Meanwhile, even as the blast howls along the deserted street, let us enter the mansion of Ezekiel Bogart, which, as you are aware, stands, with its old time exterior, alone and desolate, amid the huge structures devoted to traffic.

In the first of the seven vaults,—square in form, and lined with shelves from the ceiling to the floor,—Ezekiel Bogart sits alone. The hanging lamp diffuses its mild beams around the silent place. Ezekiel is seated in the arm-chair, by the table, his form enveloped in the wrapper or robe of dark cloth lined with scarlet. The dark skull-cap

covers the crown of his head; his eyes are hidden by huge green glasses, and the large white cravat envelopes his throat and the lower part of his face. Leaning forward, his elbow on the table, and his cheek upon his hand, which, veined and sinewy, is white as the hand of a corpse, Ezekiel Bogart is absorbed in thought.

"I have not seen Gaspar Manuel since last night," he utters his thoughts aloud. "This, indeed, is singular! The hour of the final settlement is near, and something definite must be known in regard to the lands in California, near the mission of San Luis. What can have prevented him from seeing me the second time? Can he have met with an accident?"

He rang the bell which lay near his hand; presently, in answer to the sound, the aged servant appeared; the same who admitted Gaspar Manuel last night, and whose spare form is clad in gray livery, faced with black.

"Michael, you remember the foreign gentleman, Gaspar Manuel, who was here last night?"

"That very pale man, with long hair, and such dark eyes? Yes, sir."

"You are sure that he has not called here to-day?"

"Sure, sir. I have not laid eyes upon him since last night."

"It is strange!" continued Ezekiel Bogart,—“You have attended to all my directions, Michael?”

"The banquet-room is prepared as you ordered it, and all your other commands have been carefully obeyed," answered Michael.

"This will be a busy night for you, Michael. From this hour until four in the morning,

yes, until daybreak, you will wait in the reception room below, and admit into the house the persons whose names you will find on this card."

Michael advanced and took the card from the hand of his master.

"These persons,—these only,—mark me, Michael," continued Ezekiel, in a tone of significant emphasis. "And as they arrive, show them up-stairs, into the small apartment, next the banquet-room. Tell each one, as he arrives, that I will see him at four o'clock."

Michael bowed, and said, "Just as you direct, I will do."

"One of the persons, however, John Hoffman, otherwise called Ninety-One, I wish to see as soon as he arrives. Bring him to this room at once. You remember him, a stout, muscular man, with a scarred face?"

"I do. He was here with you a few hours since."

"There is another of the persons named on that card, whom you will bring to this room at once; Gaspar Manuel, who was here last night. Remember, Michael."

Michael bowed in token of assent, and was about to leave the room, when Ezekiel called him back,

"About midnight, four persons, having charge of a box, will come to the door and ask for me. Take charge of the box, Michael, and dismiss them. Have the box carried up into the banquet-room. You can now retire, Michael. I know that you will attend faithfully to all that I have given you to do."

"You may rely upon me, sir," said the tried servant, and retired from the room.

And, once more alone, Ezekiel rested his cheek on his hand, and again surrendered himself to thought.

"The child of Gulian *must* be found; Ninety-One cannot fail. If he is not found before four o'clock, all is lost—all is lost! Yes, if that child does not appear, this estate,—awful to contemplate in its enormous wealth,—will pass from his grasp, and the labor of twenty-one years will have been spent for nothing. The estate will pass into the hands of the seven, not one of whom will use his share for anything but the gratification of his appetites or the oppression of his kind."

The old man rose, the light shone over his tall figure, bent by age, as, placing his hands behind his back, he paced to and fro along the floor. He was deeply troubled. An anxiety, heavier than death, weighed down his soul.

"The seven,—look at them! Dermoyne is a poor shoemaker. This wealth will intoxicate and corrupt him. Barnhurst, a clerical voluptuary,—he will use his share to gratify his monomania. Yorke, a swindler, who grows rich upon fraud,—his share will enable him to plunge hundreds of the wealthiest into utter ruin, and convulse, to its center, the whole world of commerce and of industry. Barron,—a fashionable sensualist,—he will surround himself with a harem. Godlike, a Borgia,—an intellectual demon,—his share will create a world of crimes. Harry Royalton, a sensualist, though of a different stamp from the others, will expend his in the wine-cup and at the gambling-table. There are six of the seven,—truly a worthy company to share the largest private estate in the world! As for the seventh, he has gone to his account.

Thus meditating, Ezekiel Bogart, slowly paced the floor. He paused suddenly, for a thought full of consequences, the most vital, flashed over his soul.

"What if Martin Fulmer should refuse to divide the estate? Alas! alas! his oath,"—he pressed his hand against his forehead,— "his oath made to Gulian Van Huyden, in his last hour, will crush the very thought of such a refusal. The Will must be obeyed; yes, strictly, faithfully, to the letter, in its most minute details."

Once more resuming his walk, he continued,—

"But the child will be discovered,—the child will be here at the appointed hour."

He spoke these words in a tone of profound conviction.

"I trust in Providence; and Providence will not permit this immense wealth to pass into the hands of those who will abuse it, and make of it the colossal engine of human misery."

After a moment of silent thought, he continued,—

"No,—no,—this wealth cannot pass into the hands of the seven! When Gulian, in

his last hour, intrusted it to Martin Fulmer, bequeathing it, after the lapse of twenty-one years, to seven persons, in different parts of the union, he doubtless thought that chance, to say nothing of Providence, would find among the number at least four with good hearts and large mental vision. He did not think,—he did not dream, that at least five out of the seven would prove totally unworthy of his hopes, altogether unfit to possess and wield such an incredible wealth. And, believing in Providence, I cannot think, for a moment, that He will permit this engine of such awful power to pass into hands that will use it to the ruin and the degradation of the human race. The child will appear, and God will bless that child."

A sound pealed clear and distinct throughout the mansion. It was the old clock in the hall, striking the hour. Ezekiel stood as if spell-bound, while the sounds rolled in sad echoes through the mansion.

It struck the hour of twelve. The cycle of twenty-one years was complete.

The old man sank on his knees, and burying his face in his hands, sent up his soul, in a voiceless prayer.

"Come what will, this matter must be left to the hands of Providence," he said, in a low voice, as he rose. "If the child does not appear at four o'clock, Martin Fulmer has no other course, than to divide this untold wealth among such of the seven as are present. Before morning light his trust expires. But,—but,—" and he pressed his clenched hands nervously together,—"*the child will appear.*"

Taking up a silver candlestick, he lighted the wax candle which it held, and went, in silence, through the seven vaults, (described in a previous chapter) which contained the title-deeds, a portion of the specie, and the secret police records of the Van Huyden estate.

As he passed from silent vault to silent vault, not a word escaped his lips.

He was thinking of the incredible wealth, whose evidences were all around him,—of the awful power which that wealth would confer upon its possessors,—of Nameless, or Carl Raphael, the son of Gulian Van Huyden,—of the appointed hour, now close at hand

"What if Martin Fulmer should burn every title-deed and record here,"—he held the light above his head, as he surveyed the vault,—"*thus leaving the estate in the hands of the ten thousand tenants who now occupy its houses and lands? These parchments once destroyed, every tenant would be the virtual owner of the house or lot of land which he now occupies. This would create, in fact, ten thousand proprietors,—perhaps twenty thousand,—instead of seven heirs.*"

It was a great thought,—a thought which, carried into action, would have baptized ten thousand hearts with peace, and filled thrice ten thousand hearts with joy unspeakable. But—

"It cannot be. Martin Fulmer must keep his oath. The rest is for Providence."

He returned to the first room, or vault, and from a drawer of the table, drew forth a bundle of keys.

"I will visit *those rooms*," he said, "and in the meantime Ninety-One will arrive with Carl Raphael."

Light in hand, he left the room, and passed along a lofty corridor with paneled walls. As the light shone over his tall figure, bent with age, and enveloped in a dark robe lined with scarlet, you might have thought him the magician of some old time story, on his way to the cell of his most sacred vigils, had it not been for his skull-cap, huge green glasses, and enormous white cravat; these imparted something grotesque to his appearance, and effectually concealed his features, and the varying expressions of his countenance.

He placed a key in the lock of a door. It was the door of a chamber which no living being had entered for twenty-one years. Ezekiel seemed to hesitate ere he crossed the threshold. At length, turning the key in the lock,—it grated harshly,—he pushed open the door,—he crossed the threshold.

A sad and desolate place! Once elegant, luxurious; the very abode of voluptuous wealth, it was now sadder than a tomb. The atmosphere was heavy with the breath of years. The candle burned but dimly as it encountered that atmosphere, which, for twenty-one years, had not known a single ray of sunlight, a single breath of fresh air.

A grand old place with lofty walls, concealed by tapestry,—three windows looking to the street (they had not been opened for twenty-one years) adorned with curtains of embroidered lace, a bureau surmounted by an oval mirror, chairs of dark mahogany, a carpet soft as down, and a couch enshrined in an alcove, with silken curtains and coverlet and pillow, yet bearing the impress of a human form. A grand old place, but there was dust everywhere; everywhere dust, the breath of years, the wear and tear of time. You could not see your face in the mirror; the cobwebs covered it like a veil. You left the print of your footsteps upon the downy carpet. The purple tapestry, was purple no longer; it was black with dust, and the moth had eaten it into rags. The once snow-white curtains of the windows, were changed to dingy gray, and the canopy of the couch, looked anything but pure and spotless, as the light fell over its folds.

Did Ezekiel Bogart hesitate and tremble as he approached that couch?

He held the light above his head,—and looked within the couch. Silken coverlet and downy pillow, covered with dust, and bearing still the impress of the form which had died there twenty-one years ago.

"Alice Van Huyden!" ejaculated Ezekiel Bogart, as though the dead one was present, listening to his every word,—“Here, twenty-one years ago, you gave birth to your son, and,—died. Yes, here you gave life to that son,—Carl Raphael Van Huyden I must call him,—who, once condemned to death,—then buried beside you in the family vault,—then for two years the tenant of a mad-house, will at four o'clock, appear and take possession of his own name, and of the estate of his father!”

Turning from the bed, Ezekiel approached the bureau. The mirror was thick with dust, and in front of it stood an alabaster candlestick—the image of a dancing nymph,—now alas! looking more like ebony than alabaster. It held a half-burned waxen candle.

“That candle, when lighted last, shone over the death agonies of Alice Van Huyden.”

Up and down that place, whose very air breathed heart-rending memories, the old

man walked, his head sinking low and lower on his breast at every step.

He paused at length before a portrait, covered with dust. Standing on a chair, Ezekiel with the purple tapestry, brushed the dust away from the canvas and the walnut frame. The portrait came out into light, so fresh, so vivid, so life-like, that Ezekiel stepped hastily from the chair as though the apparition of one long dead, had suddenly confronted him.

It was a portrait of a manly face, shaded by masses of brown hair. There was all the hope of young manhood, in the dark eyes, on the cheeks rounded with health, and upon the warm lips full of life and love. A fresh countenance; one that you would have taken at sight for the countenance of a man of true nobility of heart and soul. It was the portrait of Gulian Van Huyden at twenty-one.

For a long time Ezekiel Bogart lingered silently in front of the portrait.

At last he left the chamber, locked the door,—first pausing to look over his shoulder toward the bed upon which Alice Van Huyden died,—and then slowly ascended to the upper rooms of the old mansion.

* * * * *

He came into a small chamber paneled with oak; an oaken pillar, crowned with carved flowers, and satyr faces in every corner; and a death's head grinning from the center of the oaken ceiling. Once the floor, the walls, the ceiling and the pillars, had shone like polished steel, but now they were black with dust.

Holding the light above his skull-cap, Ezekiel silently surveyed the scene.

Two tressels stood in the center of the floor. These were the only objects to break the monotony of the dust-covered floor and walls.

Upon these tressels, twenty-one years before, had been placed a coffin, inscribed with the name of Gulian Van Huyden, and the dates,—December 25th, 1823, and December, 25th, 1844.

Opposite these tressels, a panel had recently been removed, disclosing a cavity or recess in the wall. In the recess the iron chest had been buried twenty-one years before. It was vacant now,—the iron chest was gone.

As the light shone around this place, whose every detail was linked with the past, the breast of Ezekiel Bogart heaved with emotion, but no word passed his lips. He lingered there a long time.

Through the confined doorway, he passed into the garret nook, whose roof was formed by the slope of the heavy rafters, which now were hung with cobwebs, while a small window, with heavy frame and narrow panes, shook to the impulse of the winter wind. A mahogany desk and an old-fashioned arm-chair, stand between the door and the window.

"Here Gulian and Martin Fulmer held their last interview," soliloquized Ezekiel, as he stood alone in the dreary garret,—“there stood Gulian, there knelt Martin, as he took the oath. Fifteen minutes afterward, Gulian was a corpse, and Martin was loaded with the awful trust, which he has borne alone for twenty-one years.”

He approached the window. All was dark without. Sleet and snow beat against the window-pane. The wind howled dismally over the roof; the storm was abroad over the city and the bay.

“From this window he saw Manhattan Bay, and the spire of old Trinity. Yes, from this window, he pointed out to Martin Fulmer, the windows of the Banquet-room, in the western wing of the mansion, as they shone with the glad light of the Christmas Festival. It is Christmas again,—once more the windows of the banquet-room are lighted,—yes, I can see the lights glimmering through the storm,—but not for a festival. Ah me! what years have passed since those windows were lighted for a festival.

Sadly Ezekiel Bogart left the garret, and descending the narrow stair-case, and passing a corridor, made the best of his way toward the lower rooms of the mansion. Impressed to his very soul, with the *consciousness* that he would soon behold the son of Gulian Van Huyden—Carl Raphael—he entered the first of the seven vaults, where the hanging lamp still shone upon the arm-chair, the shelved walls, and the huge table overspread with papers.

Seating himself in the arm-chair, he rang the bell. It was not long before the aged servant appeared.

“Has John Hoffman, otherwise called Ninety-One, arrived?”

“No, Sir.”

“This, indeed, is strange, very strange!” ejaculated Ezekiel, much agitated, “and Gaspar Manuel—has he been here?”

“No, sir,” answered Michael, “the four persons with the box have been here, and that is all. I had the box carried into the banquet-room.”

At a sign from Ezekiel, the aged servant retired.

“Altogether strange! The seven were notified by letter, and by a carefully worded advertisement in the daily papers, of the *place* and *hour* of meeting. And not one arrived! What if they should not appear?”

The sound of the old clock disturbed his meditations. One,—two,—three! He had passed three hours in wandering through the old mansion. Only a single hour remained.

“Three hours gone!” Ezekiel started from his chair, “no word of Ninety-One, Gaspar Manuel, or the seven! It may be,” and he felt a strange hope kindling in his heart, “that the night will pass and not one of the seven appear!”

The words had not passed his lips, when a heavy footstep was heard in the corridor, and the door was flung open. A stout muscular form came rapidly to the light. It was Ninety-One. His garments were covered with snow, and there were stains of blood upon his scarred face. From beneath his shaggy eyebrows, knit in a settled frown, his eyes shone with a ferocious glare.

“What news?” ejaculated Ezekiel.

Ninety-One struck his clenched hand upon the table, and gave utterance to a blasphemous oath.

“News? Hell’s full of sich news! Only to think of it! It’s enough to set a man to wishin’ himself safe in jail again. ‘Don’t give it up so easy!’ That’s what I’ve said all along. An’ I have *not* give it up easy, nayther. And now what’s it come to?”

“The Boy,—the son of Gulian Van Huyden,” cried Ezekiel, resting his hands upon the table.

Ninety-One sank into a chair and wiped the blood from his face.

“You know I tracked the boy all day,

until I found his quarters in the four story buildin', whar there was a dead man?—"

"Yes,—yes,—and you came and told me that you had found his home. The people in the room adjoining the one which he occupies, informed you that he had gone out with the young girl, but that he would shortly return. You came and told me, and then went back to his room to await his return, taking with you a letter from me—"

"I went back, and waited, and waited, havin' no company but the dead man, until dark. Then I sallied out, and went to the house, where we all was last night. I'd a hard time to get in, but git in I did,—and jist too late—"

"Too late?—"

"The boy and the gal had been thar, and they'd jist gone. One of the folks in livery show'd me which way,—'down the street toward the river, and only five minutes ago,' says he. Down the street I put, and by this time the snow was fallin' and the wind blowin' a harrycane. Down the street I put, and when I came near the river, I heer'd a woman cry out, 'help! murder!' Mind, I tell you, I lost no time, but made straight for the pier, an' thar I find the gal, wringin' her hands an' p'intin' to the river—"

"And the boy—the son of Gulian?—"

"Four fellers had come behind him, as he was about turnin' into the street in which he lived,—they had dragged him from her,—she follered them on to the pier, cryin', 'help! murder!' and they'd tied him, and put him into a boat and made out into the river. As she told me this story, I looked about me for a boat,—thar wasn't a boat to be seen,—so I detarmined to jump in and swim arter 'em anyhow, though the river was full of ice and the wind a-blowin' like Lucifer—"

"You leaped into the river?—"

"No, I did not. For as the gal stood cryin', an' moanin', an' p'intin', out into the dark thick night, the boat came back, and the four gallus birds jumped on the wharf—"

"And the child,—O, my God! the son of Gulian?—"

"They'd hove him overboard!"

The old man uttered a heart-rending groan, and raised his hands to heaven.

"Fatality!" he cried.

"I made at 'em at once,—and we j'ined in, four to one, teeth an' toe nails. 'Don't give it up so easy!' I said, but what's the use o' talkin'? I broke a jaw for one of 'em an' caved the *crust in* for another; but I wa'n't a match for slung-shot behind the ear. They knocked me stoopid. An' when I opened my eyes again, I found myself in their hands, arrested on the charge o' havin' murdered young Somers, an' o' robbin' Isr'el Yorke. They tied me, took me to a room up town, whar they war j'ined by Blossom,—they tried to gouge money out o' me, but as I hadn't any, it wa'n't so easy. When they got tired o' that, I pertended to sleep, an' overheard their talk. The hansum Colonel, Tarleton, my pertikler friend, had hired the four to waylay the boy, and carry him out into the river. Blossom didn't know anythin' about it; he swore like a fiery furnace when they told him of it. Arter a while, as I found they were goin' to take me to the Tombs if they couldn't git any money out o' me, I broke for the door, and came away in a hurry, an' here I am."

"And the child of Gulian is gone! Fatality! Fatality!" groaned Ezekiel Bogart.

"In the river,—tied and gagged,—in the river," sullenly replied Ninety-One; and the next moment he uttered a wild cry and leaped to his feet.

Ezekiel Bogart had removed the skull-cap, the green glasses and the huge cravat. In place of a countenance obscured by a grotesque disguise, appeared a noble face, a broad forehead, rendered venerable by masses of snow-white hair. His beard, also white as snow, left bare the outlines of his massive chin and descended upon his breast. And sunken deep beneath his white eyebrows, his large eyes shone with the light of a great intellect, a generous heart. It was indeed a noble head. True, his mouth was large, and the lips severely set, his large nose bent to one side, his cheek-bones high and prominent, but the calm steady light of his eyes, the bold outlines of his forehead,—stamped with thought, with genius,—gave character to his entire face, and made its very deviations from regularity of feature, all the more impressive and commanding.

"It is the Doctor!" cried Ninety-One. "Yer ha'r is white and thar's wrinkles about

yer mouth an' eyes, but I know you, Doctor Martin Fulmer."

CHAPTER II.

THE SEVEN ARE SUMMONED.

It was, in truth, that singular man, who in the course of our narrative, has appeared as the Judge of the Court of Ten Millions as the "man in the surtout, with manifold capes," as Ezekiel Bogart, the General Agent; and who, at length, appears in his own character,—Dr. Martin Fulmer, the trustee of the Van Huyden estate.

"Be silent, John,"—the Doctor rose and gently waved his hand,—his bent form for a moment became straight and erect,—his attitude was noble and impressive. "The child whom, twenty-one years ago, Gulian Van Huyden intrusted to your care, has, this night,—even as the misfortunes of long years were about to be succeeded by peace, security, the possession of unbounded wealth,—met his death at the instigation of Gulian's brother. Be silent, John, for the shadow of almighty fate is passing over us! It was to be, and it was! Who shall resist the decrees of Providence? Behold! the fabric which I have spent twenty-one years to build, is dust and ruins at my feet!"

There was the dignity of despair in his tone, his look, his every attitude.

He slowly moved toward the door.—"Remain here, John, until morning. I may want the aid of your arm. The worst has fallen upon me," he continued, as though speaking to himself, "and nothing now remains but to fulfill the last conditions of my trust, and—to die."

He left the room, and in the darkness, along corridor, and up stairway, pursued his way slowly to the banquet-room.

"To this estate I have offered up twenty-one years of my life,—of my soul. For it I have denied myself the companionship of a wife, the joy of hearing a child call me by the name of 'father!' I have traversed the globe in its behalf; made myself a dweller in all lands; have left the beautiful domain of that science which loses itself among the stars, to make myself a student in the science of human misery, in the dark philosophy of human despair. I have made myself

the very slave of this estate. Believing that one day, its enormous wealth would be devoted to the amelioration of social misery, I have made myself familiar with the entire anatomy of the social world; have dwelt in the very heart of its most loathsome evils; have probed to the quick the ulcer of its moral leprosy. But at all times, and in every phase of my career, I did hope, that out of this son of Gulian's, cast like a waif upon the voyage of life, and made the subject of superhuman misfortune, PROVIDENCE would at length mould a good, strong man, with heart and intellect, to wield the Van Huyden estate, for the social regeneration of his race. My hope is ashes."

With words like these in his soul, only half-uttered on his tongue, he opened a door and passed into the banquet-room.

It was brilliantly lighted by an antique chandelier which hung from the lofty ceiling. It was arranged for the last scene.

In this banquet-room, twenty-one years ago, there was the sound of merry voices, mingled with the clink of wine-glasses; there were hearts mad with joy, and faces dressed in smiles; and there was one face dressed in smiles, which masked a heart devoured by the tortures of the damned.

Now the scene was changed. The doors, windows, the pictures of the Van Huyden family which lined the lofty walls, were concealed by hangings of bright scarlet. A round table, covered with a white cloth, and surrounded by eight antique arm-chairs, alone broke the monotony of that vast and brilliantly lighted banquet-hall. The chandelier which shone upon the hangings, and lighted up every part of the room, shone down upon the white cloth of the table, and upon a single object which varied its surface,—a small portfolio, bound in black leather.

In that portfolio were comprised the mysteries of the Van Huyden estate.

Beneath the table, and shaded by it from the light, dimly appeared an iron chest, and a coffin covered with black cloth,—both were half-concealed beneath a pall of velvet, fringed with tarnished gold.

Martin Fulmer attentively surveyed this scene, and a sudden thought seemed to strike him. "It will not do," he said, "let the old place, in this hour, put on all its memories."

He rang the bell, and four servants, attired in gray liveries, appeared from beneath the hangings. Martin whispered his commands in a low voice, and they obeyed without a word. Moving to and fro, without uproar, in the course of a few minutes they had completely changed the appearance of the hall. Thus changed, the banquet-room has, indeed, put on its old memories; it wears the look, it breathes the air of the past.

The light of the chandelier, no longer dazzling, falls in subdued radiance around a lofty hall, whose ceiling is supported by eight pillars of cedar, grotesquely carved from base to capital, with the faces of monks and nuns,—all of the round and oily stamp,—with beasts, and birds, and fruits, and flowers. The glaring scarlet hangings cluster in festoons around the capitals of the pillars; and between the pillars appear, upon the paneled walls, portraits of the Van Huyden family, in frames of oak, and walnut, and gilt, for seven generations; beginning with the grim face of THE ANCESTOR, who landed on Manhattan Island in the year 1620, and ending with the youthful, artist-like face of Carl Raphael, painted in 1842. (This portrait of Nameless, Martin Fulmer procured from the study of Cornelius Berman.) The lofty windows on one side, were hidden by curtains of dark purple. At one end of the spacious hall, was a broad hearth, blazing with a cheerful wood-fire; at the other, on a dark platform, arose a marble image of "THE MASTER," as large as life, and thrown distinctly into view by the dark background.

There are two altars covered with black velvet, fringed with gold; one on each side of the table. The altar on the right supports the coffin; the one on the left, the iron chest; and around coffin and iron chest, as for a funeral, tall wax candles are dimly burning.

The dark paneled walls,—the huge pillars, quaintly carved,—the pictures, all save one, dim with age,—the hearth and its flame,—the white image of the Savior,—the central table, with its eight arm-chairs,—the dark altars, with wax candles burning around coffin and iron chest,—all combined to present an effect which, deepened by the dead stillness, is altogether impressive and ghast-like.

"The place looks like the old time," ex-

claims Martin Fulmer, slowly surveying its every detail,—“and,—”

The sound of the old clock again! How it rings through the mansion,—rings, and swells, and dies away! One,—two,—three,—four!

Martin Fulmer sinks into the arm-chair, at the head of the table, and from beneath his waistcoat draws forth a parchment,—the last will and testament of Gulian Van Huyden.

“There is no other way,—I must begin;” he casts his eyes toward a narrow doorway, across which is stretched a curtain. Behind that curtain wait the heirs of the Van Huyden estate. The old man, erect in his chair, at the head of the table, passes his right hand thoughtfully over his broad forehead, and through the masses of his hair, as white as snow.

And then directing his gaze toward the doorway, he begins to call the names of the Seven:

“Evelyn Somers!”

No answer,—the merchant prince now sleeps a corpse within his palace.

“Beverly Barron!”—the name of the man of fashion resounds through the still hall.

But Beverly will never fold in his arms again, the form of a tempted and yielding maiden; never place his lips again to the lips of a faithless wife, whom he has made false to her marriage vow,—never press a father's kiss upon the brow of his motherless child. Beverly also has gone to his account.

“Harry Royalton!” exclaimed Martin Fulmer, and again directed his eyes toward the door.

Is that his step, the man of the race-course, the hero of the cock-pit and faro-bank? No. It was but a breath of air among the window-curtains. But where, in this hour, of all others, is Harry Royalton of Hill Royal? It cannot be told. He does not appear.

Martin Fulmer, with something of surprise upon his face, spoke the fourth name,—

“Herman Barnhurst!”

Herman, the voluptuous, and the fair-cheeked, and eagle-eyed,—the victim of beautiful Marion Merlin,—the husband of outraged Fanny Lansdale,—the seducer of poor Alice Burney,—Herman does not answer the summons.

A wild hope began to gleam in the deep eyes of Martin Fulmer,—“Four of the seven absent,—why not all?” And he called the fifth name; the name of one, whom, most of all others, he desired to be present:—

“Arthur Dermoyne!”

Loud and deep it swelled, but there was no reply. Enthusiast and mechanic, who, at your work-bench, have laid out plans of social regeneration,—who, amid the clatter of hammers, and hum of toil, have heard the words of the four gospels, and thought of wealth only as the means of putting those words into deeds,—where do you linger at this hour? Alas, Dermoyne is silent; he does not appear.

The light in Martin's eyes grew brighter, “Five of the Seven, why not all?”

“Gabriel Godlike!” he pronounced the name, and paused in suspense for the answer to the summons.

“Here!” cried a voice of thunder, and through the parted curtains, the imposing form of the statesman emerged into light. His broad chest was clad in a blue coat with bright metal buttons; a white cravat made his bronzed face look yet darker; he advanced with a heavy stride, his great forehead looming boldly in the light, his eyes deep sunken beneath the brows, glaring like living coals. His cheek was flushed,—with wine—or with the excitement of the hour?

Ponderous and gloomy and grand, as when he arose to scatter thunderbolts through the thronged senate,—attired in the same brown coat which he wore on state occasions,—he came to the table, assumed a seat opposite Dr. Martin Fulmer, and said in his deepest bass,—“I am here, and ready for the final settlement of the Van Huyden estate.”

It is no shame to Dr. Fulmer to say, that he had rather confronted the entire Seven together, than to have to deal with this man alone. “The estate decreed into those hands, which know neither remorse or fear?”—he shuddered.

Then he called the seventh name,—

“Israel Yorke!”

No delay this time. With a hop and a spring,—spectacles on nose, and sharp gray eyes glancing all about him,—the little financier came through the curtain, and advancing

to the table, seated himself beside Godlike, like Mammon on right of Lucifer.

“And I am here,” he said, pulling his whiskers, and then running his hand over his bald head,—“Here and ready for the final settlement of the Van Huyden estate.”

“And is this all?” ejaculated Martin Fulmer; and once more he called the names of the Seven. There was no response.

CHAPTER III.

“SAY, BETWEEN US THREE!”

MARTIN FULMER uttered a deep sigh, and then gazing upon the representatives of Satan and of Mammon he said! “Gentlemen, you know the purpose for which you are here?”

“We do,” they said, and each one laid his copy of the will on the table.

“The first thing in order, is the reading of the Will,” said Martin Fulmer solemnly. And while a dead stillness pervaded, he read the will; and afterward briefly recounted the circumstances connected with the death of the testator.

When he had finished, the silence remained for some moments unbroken. The lights flashed upon the smart concealed visage of the financier,—the grand satanic face of the statesman,—the calm face of Martin Fulmer, with the bold brow, and hair as white as snow; and as a breath of wind moved the lights, they flashed fitfully over the coffin, and the iron chest, the cedar pillars, and the marble image.

“There is no son in existence?” asked Israel nervously.

“None,” answered Martin in a low voice.

“He did not die in a cause pre-eminent for its sanctity?” asked Gabriel in a deep voice.

“It cannot be said that he did,” answered Martin, as though questioning his own conscience.

“The disposition of this estate, depends then entirely upon your integrity, and especially upon your fidelity to your oath?”—the statesman, as though he knew the chord most sensitive, in the strong honest nature of Martin Fulmer, watched him keenly, as he awaited his answer.

Martin bowed his head.

"Under those circumstances, it is clear to you, is it not, that the estate falls to those of the Seven Heirs, who are now present?"

"If I am faithful to my OATH, such will be my disposition of the estate."

"Faithful to your oath?" echoed Godlike.

"That would be highly immoral," said Israel Yorke.

It was in a slow and measured tone, and with his venerable head, placed firmly on his shoulders, that Martin Fulmer said,—

"Sir, you know me," to Godlike,—"in the times of the Bank panic, I met you in the vestibule of the senate, and had some interesting conversation with you. You know that I would sooner die than break my word, much less my oath, and of all others, THE OATH which I took to Gulian Van Huyden. But may not circumstances arise in which the breaking of that oath may be a lighter crime, than strict obedience to it?"

Godlike started—Yorke half rose from his chair.

"Reflect for a moment. Circumstances have arisen, which the testator could not have ever dreamed of, when he loaded me with this trust, under the seal of that awful oath. It was doubtless his wish that his estates, swelled by the accumulation of twenty-one years, should descend into the hands of his son, who having been reared in poverty and hardship, would know how to use this wealth for the good of mankind,—or in the absence of his son, that it should be *dispersed* for the good of the race, by the hands of seven persons, selected from the descendants of the original Van Huyden, and scattered throughout the Union. Such was doubtless his idea. But behold how different the result. The son is dead. Only two of the Seven are here. Shall I, adhering to the letter of the law, to the oath in its strictest sense, divide this great estate between you two? Or, fearful of the awful evil which you may work to the world, with this untold wealth, shall I—in order to avoid this evil,—refuse to divide the estate, and take upon myself the moral penalty of the broken oath?"

"That is a question which you must settle with your own conscience," said Godlike slowly, as he fixed his gaze upon Martin Fulmer's face.

Was he aware of the one weak point in the strong, bold mind of Dr. Martin Fulmer? Did he know of Dr. Martin Fulmer's fear and horror of—the unpardonable sin?

Martin did not reply, but leaned his head upon his hand, and seemed buried in thought.

"In order to understand my position, reflect,—twenty-one years ago, the estate was but two millions; behold it now!" He unlocked the portfolio, and drew forth two half sheets of foolscap, covered with writing in a delicate but legible hand! "There is a brief statement of the estate as it stands."

Israel eagerly grasped one half sheet; Godlike took the other. Martin Fulmer intensely watched their faces as they read.

Rapidly Godlike's eagle eye, perused that index to the untold wealth of the Van Huyden estate.

"It would purchase the Presidency of the United States!" he muttered with a heaving chest,—*"enthroned upon that pedestal, a man might call kings his menials, the world his plaything."*

"One hundred millions! Astor multiplied by Girard!" ejaculated Israel Yorke,—*"with such a capital, one might buy Rothschild, and keep him too!"*

Glorious and eloquent half sheet of foolscap! Talk of Milton, Shakspeare, Homer,—your poetry is worth all theirs combined! What flight of theirs, in their loftiest moods, can match in sublimity, the simple and majestic march of this swelling line,—

"One hundred millions of dollars!"

"This is a dream," said Godlike,—and for once his voice was tremulous.

"Enough to set one raving!" cried Israel Yorke.

"And yet, adhering to the strict letter of my oath,—" the voice and look of Martin Fulmer was sad,—despairing,—*"I am bound to divide this incredible wealth between you two."*

"Say, between us three!" cried a new voice, and as Martin Fulmer raised his head, and the others started in their seats, the speaker came with a rapid stride from the curtained doorway to the table.

It was Randolph Royalton, the white slave. Folding his arms upon the breast of his frock coat,—made of dark blue cloth,—

which was buttoned to his throat, he stood beside the table, his face lividly pale, and his dark hair floating wild and disheveled about his forehead.

"You!—a negro!"—and Godlike's lip curled in sardonic scorn.

Trembling as with an excitement continued for long hours, Randolph turned to Martin Fulmer, and said:

"I am the oldest child of John Augustine Royalton, and his lawful heir. And I am here! There is the proof that my father was married to Herodia, my mother,—” he placed a paper in the hands of Martin Fulmer,—“I am here in the name of my father, to claim my portion of the Van Huyden estate.”

Israel was very restless,—Godlike very gloomy and full of scorn, as Martin Fulmer attentively perused the document.

"You have a copy of the Will, addressed to your father?" asked the old man, raising his eyes to Randolph's colorless face.

Randolph drew a parchment from the breast of his coat,—“There is my father's copy, superscribed with his name.”

"I recognize you as the elder son of John Augustine Royalton,” said Dr. Fulmer, very calmly,—“These proofs are all sufficient. Be seated, sir.”

Randolph uttered a wild cry, and pressed his forehead with both hands.

It was a moment before he recovered his composure. “You said *negro*! just now!” he turned to Godlike, his blue eyes flashing with deadly hatred, “learn sir, that had yonder bit of paper failed to establish my right, that this at least establishes my descent from ————!”

Godlike repeated that great name, in a tone of mingled incredulity and contempt.

“Ay, *he* was the father of Herodia,—I am his grandson. There is my grandfather's handwriting,” he placed the paper in the hands of Martin Fulmer, “Read it, sir, for the information of this statesman. Let him know that the few drops of *negro blood* which flow in my veins, are lost and drowned in the blood of a man whose name is history,—of———!”

Martin Fulmer read the paper aloud, adding, “You perceive he speaks the truth. He is the grandson of ————.”

“Pardon me,—I was hasty,” said the statesman, extending his hand.

Randolph did not seem to notice the extended hand, but dropping into a chair, said, quietly,—“There are *three* of us *now*, I believe.”

And he regarded the statesman with a look which was full of triumph and scorn.

Martin Fulmer looked into the faces of the three, and then bent his head in deep thought,—deep and harrowing thought, extending over every instant of twenty-one years.

From the portfolio he drew forth two half sheets of paper, covered with writing in his own hand. One bore the signature of Gabriel Godlike, the other that of Israel Yorke.

“These papers, embracing an absolute renunciation of all their claims upon the Van Huyden estate, they signed before the Court of Ten Millions,—signed, without knowing their contents. Shall I produce them?”

He hesitated.—“But no! no! I am not clear as to the right of any one to dispose of his share.”

Martin Fulmer, before the bar of his own conscience, was fanatically just. He *might* use these papers, but before his own conscience he dared not.

“I am decided,” he exclaimed, despair impressed upon his face,—“I must fulfill my oath. Gentlemen, I recognize you as the three heirs of the Van Huyden estate, you having appeared at the appointed hour.”

The same electric throb of joy—joy intense to madness,—ran through the bosoms of the three, but manifested itself in different ways. The diminutive financier bounded from his chair; Godlike uttered an oath; Randolph muttered between his teeth, “The *negro* is, indeed, then, one of the three.”

“I will presently give to each of you a certificate, over my own hand, stating that you appeared at the appointed hour, and pledging myself, within a week, to apportion this vast estate among you.”

Without taking time to notice the expression of their faces, he continued,—

“But first, we must open this,”—he pointed to the iron chest,—“and this,”—to the coffin, around which, as around the iron chest, tall wax candles were dimly burning,

"Whatever these may contain, they cannot affect nor change my decision. But they must be opened,—so the will directs."

CHAPTER IV.

THE LEGATE OF HIS HOLINESS.

As he rose from his seat and advanced toward the iron chest, the curtain of the doorway was thrust aside, and the light shone upon a slender form, clad in black, and upon a pallid face, framed in masses of jet-black hair.

"Gaspar Manuel! at last!" ejaculated Martin Fulmer.

"Pardon me for this intrusion," said Gaspar Manuel, in a tone of quiet dignity,—"I would have seen you ere this, but unexpected events prevented me. It is of the last importance that I should converse with you without delay."

The entrance of the man, whose slender form was clad in a frock-coat of black cloth, single-breasted, and reaching to the knees,—whose face, unnaturally pale, was in strong contrast with the blackness of his moustache and beard, and of the hair, which fell in wavy masses to his shoulders,—created a singular and marked impression.

With one impulse, Godlike, Yorke and Randolph rose to their feet. For the first time, they remarked that the stranger wore on his right breast a golden cross, and carried in his left hand a casket of dark wood,—perchance ebony.

"I wish to see you in regard to the lands in California, near the mission of San Luis," said Gaspar Manuel, his voice, touched with a foreign accent, yet singularly sweet and emphatic in its intonation.—"Lands claimed by yourself, on behalf of the Van Huyden estate, and also by the Order of Jesus. Many acres of these lands are rich in everything that can bless a climate soft as Italy, but there are one thousand barren acres which abound in fruit like this."

He placed the casket upon the table, unlocked it, and displayed its contents.

"Gold!" burst from every lip.

"Those thousand acres contain gold sufficient to change the destinies of the world," said Gaspar Manuel, calmly, as he fixed his dazzling eyes upon the face of Godlike.—

"The contest for the possession of this untold wealth lies between the Order of Jesus and the Van Huyden estate."

"Have not the Mexican Government appointed a Commissioner to decide upon their respective claims?" As he asked the question, Dr. Martin Fulmer, (who, as Ezekiel Bogart, had seen Gaspar Manuel dressed as a man of the world) gazed in surprise upon that costume which indicated the Jesuit. There was suspicion as well as surprise in his gaze.

"That Commissioner is one of the rulers of the Jesuits,—an especial Legate of the Roman Pope," continued Martin, surveying Gaspar Manuel with a look of deepening suspicion. "His name is——"

"Never mind his name," interrupted Gaspar Manuel,—"Let it satisfy you that I am a Jesuit, perchance one of the rulers of that Order. And I am the LEGATE of whom you speak."

"You!" echoed Martin Fulmer, and his ejaculation was repeated by the others.

"I am that Commissioner," replied Gaspar Manuel, "and my decision has been made. Allow me a few moments for reflection, and I will make it known to you. While you converse with those gentlemen, I will warm myself at yonder fire, for the climate is hard to bear, after the bland atmosphere of Havanna."

With a wave of the hand and a slight inclination of the head, he retired from the table and bent his steps toward the fire-place. Seating himself in an arm-chair, he now gazed into the flame with his flashing eyes, and now,—over his shoulder,—surveyed the banquet-hall. Then taking tablets and pencil from a side-pocket, he seemed absorbed in the mazes of a profound arithmetical calculation; but every now and then he raised his eyes, and with that dazzling glance, took in every detail of the banquet-hall.

Meanwhile, the group around the table had not yet recovered from the impression, produced by his presence.

"A singular man,—eh?" quoth Yorke.

"A man of rank. I think I have seen his face in Washington City," remarked Godlike.

"A dignitary of the Catholic Church," exclaimed Randolph.—"A man of no common order."

As for Martin Fulmer, glancing by turns at the box, filled with golden ore, and at the form of the Legate, who was seated quietly by the fire-place, he said, with a sigh,—“More gold, more wealth!” and thought of Carl Raphael, the son of Gulian Van Huyden.

“Let us open the iron chest,” he said, and placed the key in the lock, while Randolph, Godlike and Yorke, gathered round, in mute suspense.

But ere the key turned in the lock, a new interruption took place. The aged servant, Michael, entered, and placed a slip of paper, on which a single line was written, in the hands of Martin Fulmer. The old man read it at a glance, and at once his face glowed, his eyes shone with new light.

“The person who wrote this, Michael,—where—where is he?” he said, in a tremulous voice.

“In the reception-room,” answered Michael.

“Show him here,—at once,—at once,—quick, I say!” and he seized Michael by the arm, and pointed to the door, his face displaying every sign of irrepressible agitation. Michael hurried from the room.

“Let us all thank God, for He has not failed us!” cried Martin Fulmer, spreading forth his hands, as he walked wildly to and fro.—“The son of Gulian Van Huyden is not dead!”

A thunderbolt crushing through the ceiling, would not have created half the consternation caused by these words.

They dashed the hopes of Randolph, Godlike and Yorke to the dust.

“Not dead!” they echoed, in a breath.

“He is not dead. He is living, and in this house. In a moment he will be here,—here, to claim his father’s estate.”

And in the wildness of his joy, Martin Fulmer hurried to and fro, now wringing his hands, now spreading them forth in thankfulness to heaven.

“I knew,” said the old man, standing erect, the light shining full upon his white hairs, “I knew that Providence would not desert me!”

CHAPTER V.

THE SON AT LAST.

THE curtain moved again, and two persons came slowly into the room; a man whose wounded arm was carried in a sling and whose livid face was marked by recent wounds,—a boy, whose graceful form was enveloped in a closely fitting frock-coat, while his young face was shaded by locks of glossy hair.

“Martin Fulmer! behold the lost child of Gulian Van Huyden!” cried Colonel Tarleton, urging the boy forward.

At sight of Tarleton, Martin Fulmer felt his whole being contract with loathing, but rushing forward, he seized the boy by the arms, and looked earnestly into his face,—a face touching in its expression, with clear, deep eyes, that now seemed blue, now gray, and round outlines, and framed in locks of flowing hair, of the richest chestnut brown.

“This,—this, is not Carl Raphael!” ejaculated Martin Fulmer, turning fiercely upon Tarleton,—

A smile crossed the bloodless lips of Tarleton.

“Not Carl Raphael, but still the son of Gulian. A word will explain all. On the last night of her life, Alice Van Huyden gave birth to two children: they were born within a half hour of each other. One was taken from her bed, and borne away by her husband. The other I bore to my home, educated as my own, and now he stands before you, the lawful heir of his father’s estate. Look at his face, and, if you can, say that he is not Gulian’s son.”

This revelation was listened to with the most intense interest by Randolph, Godlike, Yorke,—and Gaspar Manuel, attracted from the fire-place by the sound of voices, looked over their shoulders at the singular group,—the boy, with Tarleton on one hand, and Martin Fulmer on the other.

Long and intently Martin Fulmer perused that youthful countenance, which, with downcast eyes, seemed to avoid his gaze.

“Carl Raphael Van Huyden is lost,” exclaimed Martin Fulmer, “but the face, the look of Gulian Van Huyden lives again in this boy. Gentlemen, behold the son of Gulian Van Huyden, the heir to his estate!”

He urged the shrinking boy toward the light.

"I will not," cried the boy, raising his head and surveying the group with flashing eyes,—*"I will not submit to be made an accomplice in this imposture—"*

"Child!" said Tarleton, sternly.

"Nay, you shall not force me to it. Hear me one and all," and he tore open his coat and vest, and laid bare his breast, *"I am the child of Gulian Van Huyden, but not his son."*

It was a woman's bosom which the open vest bared to the light.

A dead stillness followed this revelation.

And the center of the group stood the beautiful girl in her male attire, her bosom heaving in the light, while her eyes flashed through their tears.

"I will not submit to be made the accomplice of this man's schemes," she pointed to Tarleton,—*"As the daughter of Gulian Van Huyden, I cannot inherit my father's estate."*

At this point, Gaspar Manuel stepped forward,—*"Yes you can, my child,"* he said, and drew the disguised girl to his breast, *"it is your father himself who tells you so, daughter."* And he kissed her on the forehead, while his dark hair hid her face.

Then as he held her in his arms, he raised his face, and with one hand, swept back the dark hair from his brow,—*"Martin Fulmer, don't you remember me?"* and then to Colonel Tarleton,—*"and you, brother, you certainly don't forget me?"*

That scene cannot be painted in words.

"Gulian!" was all that Tarleton or Charles Van Huyden could say, as he shrank back appalled and blasted before his brother's smile.

As for Martin Fulmer, after one eager and intense look, he felt his knees bend beneath him, and his head droop on his breast, as he uttered his soul in the words,—*"It is Gulian come back to life again."*

CHAPTER VI.

A LONG ACCOUNT SETTLED.

BACK from his brother's gaze, step by step, shrank Tarleton or Charles Van Huyden, his eyes still chained to that face, which the

grave seemed to have yielded up, to blast his schemes in the very moment of their triumph.

His own child dead,—the stain of Carl Raphael's blood upon his soul,—he felt like a man who stands amid the ruins of a falling house, when the last prop gives way.

With a cry that was scarcely human, in its awful anguish, he turned and fled. Fled from the banquet-room, and through the adjoining chamber, into the darkness of the corridor. His mind, strained to its utmost tension by the perpetual excitement of the last twenty-four hours, gave way all at once, like a bow that, drawn to its full power, suddenly snaps, even as a withered reed. All was dark around him as he rushed along the corridor, but that darkness was made luminous by his soul. It was peopled with faces, that seemed to be encircled by lurid light. The worst agony that can befall a mortal man fell upon him. Nerves disordered, brain unstrung, his very thoughts became living things, and chased him through the darkness. The face of Evelyn Somers was before him, gazing upon him with fixed eyeballs. And his steps were suddenly checked, by an agonized countenance, which was sinking in wintry waves, that seemed to roll about his very feet. He was touched on the shoulder,—his dead daughter ran beside him in her shroud, linking her arm in his, and bending forward her face, which looked up into his own, with lips that had no blood in them, and eyes that had no life. And if the darkness was full of faces, the air was full of voices; voices whispering, shouting, yelling, all through each other, and yet, every voice distinctly heard,—all the voices that he had heard in his lifetime were speaking to him now. Well might he have exclaimed in the words of Cain,—*"My punishment is greater than I can bear."*

If he could have only rid himself of Frank, who ran by his side, in her shroud! But no,—there she was,—her arm in his,—her face bent forward looking up into his own, with lips that had no blood, and eyes that had no life.

He talked to those phantoms,—he bade them back,—he rushed on, through the corridor, and ascended the dark stairs with horrid shrieks. And the face of Carl Raphael,

struggling in the waves, went before him at every step.

He reached at length the narrow garret, in which years ago, Gulian Van Huyden bid Martin Fulmer, farewell. Here, as he heard the storm beat against the window panes, he for a moment recovered his shattered senses.

"I'm nervous," he cried, "if I had been drinking, I would think I had the *mania*. Let me recover myself. Where in the deuce am I?"

A heavy step was heard on the stairway, and a form plunged into the room, bearing Tarleton against the wall. It was no phantom, but the form of a stalwart man.

"Halloo! Who are you?" cried a hoarse voice,—it was the voice of Ninety-One, and as he spoke, shouts came up the narrow stairway from the passage below. "You set here to trap me,—speak?"

And the hand of Ninety-One, clutched the throat of Tarleton with an iron grip.

"This way,—this way," cried a voice, and a gleam of light shooting up the stairs, through the narrow doorway, fell upon the livid face of Tarleton.

"O, we have met at last? Do you hear them shouts? Blossom follered by the polēese are in the house, and on my track, for the murder of young Somers. In a second they'll be here. Now I've got you, and we'll settle that long account,—we will by G—d!"

"You are choking me,—A-h!" gasped Tarleton, as he was dragged toward the window. The shouts from below grew more distinct, and once more the light flashed up the stairs.

"Carl Raphael died by drownin' and that's very like chokin'," whispered Ninety-One, as he bent his face near to the struggling wretch. "I've no way of escape,—even old Fulmer can't save me. And so we'll settle that long account."

"You are choking me,—do not,—do not—"

"You know all the items, so there's no use o' dwellin' on 'em," the hoarse voice of Ninety-One was heard above the pelting of the storm, "but the murder of that 'ar boy makes the docket full. Here goes—"

Dragging Tarleton to the window, he

struck the sash, with one hand, and then kicked against it with all his strength. It yielded with a crash, and the snow and sleet rushes through the aperture in a blast.

"Spare me! Mercy! O do not—"

Ninety-One crept through the narrow aperture, out upon the roof, and dragged Tarleton after him. Then there were two forms standing erect for a moment, in the gloom, and then the blast bore away the sound of voices, and a howl that was heard, far and long, through the night.

"This way! We've caught the old fox," said a well known voice, and the red face of Blossom, adorned with carbuncles, appeared in the doorway, while the lantern which he held, filled the garret with light.

"This way," he sprang through the doorway, and followed by half a dozen men in thick coats, and with maces in their hands, he ran toward the window, "he's out upon the roof."

He held the lantern over his head, and looked without, while the snow and sleet beat in his face. From the garret-window the roof fell with a sudden slope, for the space of two yards, and there it ended. By the lantern light, he saw some rude traces of footsteps in the snow, and the print of a hand. A glance was sufficient. When he turned to confront his comrades, his red face was white as a sheet—

"By G—d the old convic' has gone an' jumped from the roof,—four storys high—as I'm a sinner!"

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE BANQUET-ROOM ONCE MORE.

MEANWHILE in the banquet-room, the Legate of the Pope, with the form of his daughter, in her male attire, nestling on his breast, raised his head, and surveyed the faces of the spectators, who had not yet recovered from their surprise. His face pale and worn, as with years of consuming thought, his eyes bright as with the fire of a soul never at rest, held every gaze enchained as he spoke,—

"Rise Martin Fulmer!" he extended his hand to the kneeling man, "rise, and let me look upon the face of—an honest man."

As though disturbed in the midst of a

dream, Martin Fulmer rose, his head with his snow-white hair and protuberant brow, presenting a strong contrast to the pallid face, dark hair and beard of the Legate.

"Look upon me, Martin Fulmer, and steadily. Do you recognize me?"

"Gulian Van Huyden!" ejaculated the old man.

The Legate surveyed Randolph, Godlike, Yorke, who formed a group behind the Doctor, while in the background, the lights burned faintly around the iron chest and coffin. Even as the Legate looked around, Randolph turned aside, and leaning against frame of yonder window, pushed the curtains aside, and looked forth upon the cold, dark night. Not so cold and dark as his own bitter fate! Well was it for him, that his face was turned from the light! That face, terribly distorted, now revealed the hell which was raging in his breast. His soul stained with crime, his last hope blotted out, whither should he turn? Grandson of ——— it had been better for you, had you never been born!

After his silent survey, the Legate spoke:

"Another place and another hour, will be needed, to repeat the full details of my life, since twenty-one years ago, I left this house,—to die," in an attitude of calm dignity, and with a voice and look, that held every soul, the Legate spoke these words,—*"I was rescued from the waves, by a boat that chanced to be passing from the shore to a ship in the bay. Upon that ship, I again unclosed my eyes to life, and watched through the cabin windows, the last glimpse of the American shore, growing faint and fainter over the waves. Thus called back to life,—my name in my native land, only known as the name of the Suicide, my estates in the hands of Martin Fulmer, left to the chances or the providence of twenty-one years,—I resolved to live. The ship (the captain and crew were foreigners,) bore me to an Italian port. I sold the jewels which were about my person when I plunged into the river, and found myself in possession of a competence. Then, in search of peace, anxious to drown the past, and still every emotion of other days, by a life of self-denial, I went to Rome, I entered the Propaganda. In the course of time I became a priest, and*

then,—well! twenty-one years passed in the service of the church have left me as I am. Your hand, brave Martin Fulmer! Think not that your course has been unknown to me! You have been watched,—your every step marked,—your very thoughts recorded,—and now it is the Legate of the Pope, who takes you by the hand, and calls you by a title, which it is beyond the power of Pope or King to create,—an honest man! Twenty times I have been near you in the course of twenty-one years,—once in Paris, when you were there on business of the estate,—once in Mexico,—once in China,—once on the Ocean,—once in Rome! How my heart yearned to disclose myself to you! But I left you go your way, and now at the end of twenty-one years, we stand face to face. And thou, my child,—" he gazed tenderly into the face of the girl, whose eyes were upraised to meet his own,—*"my beautiful! my own! Think not that the garment of the priest, chills the heart of the father!"*

"Father!" she whispered, putting her hands upon his shoulder,—*"how my heart yearned to you, when I first met you, in the dark streets,—when friendless and homeless, I was flying to the river, as my only friend!"*

It was a touching picture,—the priest, who for twenty-one years, had never permitted his heart to throb with one pulse that would remind him of the word *"Home,"* and the daughter, who, educated to serve the dark purposes of Tarleton, had never before felt her heart bound at the sight of her *Father's* face.

Martin Fulmer's face grew sad,—

"Do you regret my return?" said the Legate with a smile.

"I was thinking," said Martin, and his soul was in his eyes as he spoke,—*"I was thinking of—ROME!"*

Godlike stepped forward, with a smile on his somber visage,—*"Rome!"* he echoed,—*"of course, now that the dead has returned to life, the heirs need not think of dividing the estate. And you as priest of the Roman Church, as one of her lords, can think of but one disposition of your immense property. It will go to the church,—to Rome!"*

"To Rome!" echoed Israel Yorke. Randolph, with his face from the light, did not

seem to hear a word that was spoken. And Martin Fulmer, with his finger on his lips, awaited in evident suspense, the answer of the Legate.

"To Rome!" echoed the Legate and disengaging himself from the arms of his daughter, he stood erect. His entire face changed. His nostrils quivered, his lips curled, there was a glow on his pale cheek, and an intenser fire in his eyes. He passed his hand over his forehead, and brushing back his dark hair, stood for a moment, motionless as a statue, his eyes fixed, as though he saw passing before his soul, a panorama of the future.

"Within that brutal Rome which plants its power upon human skulls, there is a higher, mightier Rome! Within that order which uses and profanes the name of Jesus, as the instrument of its frauds, there is a higher, mightier Order of Jesus! I see this mightier church,—I see this mightier Order moving onward, through the paths of the future, combating the false Rome, and trampling under foot the false Order of Jesus! Yes, in the future, I see armed for the last battle, those friends of humanity, who have sworn to use the Roman Church as the instrument of Human Progress, or to drive forward the movement over her ruins."

The effect of these words, coupled with the look and the attitude of the Legate, was electric. They were followed by a dead stillness. The spectators gazed into each other's faces, but no one ventured to break the silence.

The silence was interrupted, however, by a strange voice,—

"Lor bress you, massa, de nigga hab a-ribe!" It was Old Royal, who emerged from the curtains, with a broad grin on his black face,—*"You know dis nigga war on de ribber in a boat, fetchin ober from Jarsey shore, a brack gemman who didn' like to trabel by de ferry boat—yah—whah! Well de nigga did it,—"*

He advanced a step,—passed his hand through his white wool,—surveyed his giant-like form clad in sleek broadcloth,—showed his white teeth, and continued, with an accent and a gesticulation that words cannot describe—

"Well, as we come across,—lor-a-massy

how de storm did storm, and de snów did snow! As we come across, dis nigga cotched by de har ob his head, a young white gemman, who war a-drownin'. An' dis same young white gemman, Massa Fulmer,—" he pointed over his shoulder, "am out dar!"

"What mean you, Royal?" cried Martin Fulmer, and he shook with the conflict of hope and suspense,—*"whom did you rescue?"*

"Dar's de white *pusson*," said Old Royal.

Leaning on the arm of Mary Berman, whose face was rosy with joy, whose bonnet had fallen on her neck, while her hair, glittering with snow-drops, strayed over her shoulders,—leaning on the arm of his wife, Nameless, or Carl Raphael, came through the doorway, and advanced toward the group.

He was clad in black, which threw his pale face, shaded by brown hair, boldly into view. His eyes were clear and brilliant; his lip firm. As he advanced, every eye remarked the resemblance between him and the Legate; and also between him, and the disguised girl, who stood by the Legate's side.

"Rescued from death by the hands of this good friend,—" his voice was clear and bold, "I returned home, and found the note which you,—" he looked at Martin Fulmer, "caused to be left there. And in obedience to the request contained in that note, I am here."

At first completely thunderstruck, the venerable man had not power to frame a word.

"Fatality!" he cried at last, "but a blessed fatality! I knew that Providence would not desert us! Come to my heart, my child! Carl,—" trembling with emotion, he took Nameless by the hand, "Carl, behold your father, who, after a lapse of twenty-one years, has appeared among us, like one risen from the grave! Behold your sister, born like you, in your mother's death-agony,—separated from you for twenty-one years,—she now rejoins you, in presence of your father!"

It was now the turn of Nameless to stand spell-bound and thunderstruck. He stood like one in a dream, until the voices of the Legate and the young girl broke on his ear, voices so like his own.

"My son!"

"Brother!"

He was gathered to the Legate's breast, who kissed him on the brow, and surveying every line of his face, felt his bosom swell with pride as he called him, "my son!" Then his sister's arms were upon his neck, and Nameless, as he saw her face, so touching, in its quiet loveliness, felt his heart swell with a rapture, never felt before, as he found himself encircled in that atmosphere which is most like heaven,—the atmosphere of a sister's love.

"Listen to me, my son," said the Legate, as he took Nameless by the hand, and his eyes lit up with a new fire, while in abrupt and broken sentences, he poured forth the story of his life. His tone was impassioned, his words electric. Carl Raphael listened, while the emotions of his soul, were written in his changing features.

"And now, my son," concluded the Legate, as he put his arm about the neck of Nameless, "twenty-one years are gone, and I appear again. The estate, from two millions, has swelled into one hundred millions. You will inherit it, and you and I, and this good man, will join together, in applying the awful power embodied in this wealth, to the best interests of the human race."

To the surprise of the Legate, Nameless unwound his arm from his neck, and stepped back from him. His face suddenly became cold and rigid as stone. Rising in every inch of his stature, he surveyed the entire scene at a rapid glance.

On his right, his father and sister. Near him the venerable old man, with Mary by his side. Somewhat apart, stood the somber Godlike, and the weazel-faced Yorke. In the background, the table, with the candles burning dimly round over chest and coffin. Around him that hall, thick on every panel with the memories of the past; and far in the shadows, the white image of the master.

And by yonder window, his form half concealed in the curtains, Randolph looks out upon the black night.

Dilating with an emotion which was incomprehensible to the spectators, Nameless said.

"No, father, I will not touch one dollar of

this wealth. It is accursed. Look at the passion it has evoked; look at the calamities which it has wrought! It is accursed,—thrice accursed. It was this wealth which impelled your own brother to attempt to corrupt my mother. It was this wealth which made that brother follow me with remorseless hatred, and to-night, for the sake of this, he planned my death. It was this wealth which drove you from your native land, there to bury all feeling in a church, which makes marriage a sacrament, and, at the same time, prevents her priests from ever enjoying that sacrament, from ever being hailed by the all-holy names of 'husband!' 'father!' There you buried twenty-one years of your life, leaving your children to breast the storm of life alone. It was this wealth which cast me, in childhood, into the streets, without friend or home,—and do you know the life I've lived? While you were saying mass at Rome, I was committing murder, father,—I was being sentenced to death,—I was buried alive in your family vault,—I was passing two years in a mad-man's cell! Look at the work of your wealth! Let these gentlemen (who, I doubt not, have been heirs of this estate in anticipation,) let them speak, and tell what passions, like fiends evoked from nethermost hell, this wealth has summoned into life! Speak, Martin Fulmer, you, who for twenty-one years, have denied yourself the blessing of wife, home, children; while in sleepless anguish you watched over this wealth,—speak! What evil thought is there in earth or hell which it has not called into deeds? No,—father,—lifting this hand to heaven, I swear by that mother, whom you left to writhe alone upon her dying bed, that I will not touch one dollar of the Van Huyden estate!"

The Legate, that is to say, Gulian Van Huyden, was crushed by these words; they fell upon him like a sentence of death.

"My son! my son!" he gasped, "spare me!"

"'Son' and 'father,' are words easily spoken," continued Nameless. "Have you been a father to me? It would be very striking, and altogether like the fifth act of a melodrama, no doubt, for me to overlook your twenty-one years of silence, and with love

and tears consent to be your heir. But you have not been my father. My father,—the father of my soul,—Cornelius Berman, lies a corpse to-night. I forgive you, father, but I cannot *forget*, for I am not the Savior; I am simply a man—”

“Have you no mercy?” faltered the Legate, who stood in the presence of his son like a criminal before his judge. “Do you not know your words are killing me?”

But Carl Raphael, as though all that was dark in his own life, all that was dark in his mother's death-hour, held possession of his soul, would not give his father one chance of justification.

“A man, father, who has known so much suffering, that he now only desires to forget the real world, in the ideal world created by his own pencil; who only desires to turn his back upon wealth and all its hatreds, and win his bread humbly, and away from the world, by the toil of his hand. Mary!—thou who wast true to me, when I slept in the coffin,—thou who wast true to me when I was the tenant of a madman's cell,—Mary! come, let us go.”

While the spectators stood like statues,—all, save Randolph, who, with his face from the light, took no notice of the scene,—he took Mary by the hand, and moved toward the door.

With one voice, his father, his sister, Martin Fulmer, called him back.

“Carl! Carl! you must not go!”

“My son! my son!”

“Brother!”

He lingered on the threshold, holding his beautiful wife by the hand.

“Father! sister! brave Martin Fulmer! come and see me in my poor man's home, and I will bless you from my heart for your presence. Come! come,—but not to tempt me with the offer of wealth; that word spoken, and we are strangers forever. For my oath is sworn, by the name of my mother, never to touch one dollar of the Van Huyden estate, and that oath is written up yonder!”

With these words, Carl Raphael, son of Gulian Van Huyden, and heir of One Hundred Million Dollars, took Mary by the hand, and passed from the banquet-hall, and from the house in which, twenty-one years before, his mother died.

EPILOGUE.

ON THE OCEAN,—BY THE RIVER SHORE,—IN THE VATICAN,—ON THE PRAIRIE.

My task is almost done. This work was commenced in January, 1848,—it is now June, 1852. Four years that have been of awful moment to the great world, and that, to many of you my readers, have brought change, affliction—have stripped you of those whose life was a part of your life, and made your pathway rich only in graves. Four years! As I am about to lay aside the pen, and shut the pages of this book, those four years start up before me, in living shape; they wear familiar faces; they speak with voices that never shall be heard on earth again.

Before the curtain falls, let us take a glance at the characters of our history.

Harry Royalton. He did not die under his brother's hands, but returned to Hill Royal, where he drank, and gambled, and talked “secession,” until a kindly bullet, from the pistol of an antagonist in a duel, relieved him of the woes of this life.

Randolph Royalton was never seen in New York, after the 25th of December, 1844. It is supposed that, aided by Martin Fulmer, he went abroad, accompanied by his sister, the beautiful Esther.

In January, 1845, Bernard Lynn, completely broken down in health and appearance, returned, with his daughter, to Europe. He died soon afterward in Florence. Eleanor, it has been rumored, committed the moral suicide of burying her life in a convent. But let us hope, that Eleanor, as well as Esther, will once more appear in active life.

Israel Yorke still flourishes; the devil is good to his children. Godlike, we believe, is yet upon the stage. And the apostolic Ishmael Ghoul, still conducts the Daily Blaze, waxing fat and strong, in total depravity. As for Sleevegammon, his competitor for public favor, he still see-saws on the tight rope, with Conservatism on one side, and Progress on the other. Blossom, the policeman, has retired from active life, and now does a great deal of nothing, for three dollars a day, in the Custom-House. Dr. Bul-

gin still thrives; he lately published a book of 345 pages, as big as his own head almost, against "Socialism." We have not been informed whether any monument of marble, with an obelisk and an epitaph, has been erected in memory of the martyred "Bloodhound."

Before we close our task, we will gaze upon four scenes; one of which took place on the ocean; another, by the shore of Hudson river; a third, in the Vatican, at Rome; the fourth and last, upon the boundless prairie.

* * * * *

It was in January, 1845.

One winter night, when the wind was bitter cold in New York, and the snow lay white upon the hills of the northern land, there was a brave ship resting motionless upon the ocean, not under a wintry sky, but under a summer sky, and in an atmosphere soft and bland as June. On her way from New York to the West Indies, she had been becalmed. She lay under the starlit sky, with her image mirrored in every detail, upon the motionless sea. All at once another light than the pale beams of the stars, flashed over the smooth expanse, and a pyramid of flame rose grandly into the sky. The ship was on fire; in less than two hours the flame died away, and in place of the brave ship, there was a blackened wreck upon the waters. All that escaped from the wreck were six souls; the captain, three of the crew, and two passengers. Upon a hastily constructed raft, with but a scanty supply of bread and water, behold them, as they float alone upon the trackless ocean. For three days, without a breath of air to fan the smooth expanse, they floated under a burning sun, in sight of the wreck, and on the evening of the third day, they shared the last crust of bread, and passed from lip to lip the last can of water. It was on the evening of the fourth day, that the captain, a brave old seaman, driven mad by the burning sun and intolerable thirst, leaped overboard, and died, without a single effort on the part of his companions to save him. His example was followed by a sailor, an old tar, who had followed him over half the globe. Thus, there remained upon the raft four persons; two passengers and two sailors.

It was the evening of the fifth day,—five days under the burning sun,—two days and nights without water!

The sun was setting. Like a globe of red hot metal, he hung on the verge of the horizon, shooting his fiery rays through a thin purple haze.

The wreck had gone down, and the raft was alone upon the motionless ocean.

The sailors were seated near each other, on the side of the raft most remote from the sun,—they were dressed in a coarse shirt and trowsers,—and with their hands resting on their knees, and their faces upon their hands, they seemed to have surrendered themselves to their fate,—that is, to despair and death, by starvation.

The passengers were on the other side of the raft; one of them was a man of slender form, dressed in dark broadcloth; his head was buried in his hands, and the setting sun shone on his hair, which, sleek and brown lay behind his ears. Beside him, in a reclining posture, was the other passenger, a woman; a woman who had escaped from the burning vessel in her night-clothes, and who now, with the cloak of the man spread beneath her, turns her dark eyes hopelessly to the setting sun. A few days ago, with her proud bosom, and rounded limbs, and dark eyes flashing from that face, whose clear, brown complexion indicated her Spanish descent, she was very beautiful. Look at her now. Livid circles beneath each eye, lips parched, cheeks hollow,—her bosom is bare,—shrunk from its once voluptuous outline, it trembles with a faint pulsation. Five days have made terrible havoc of your beauty, proud Godiva!

The man by her side raises his head from his hands,—in that sallow face, lack-luster eyes, and hollowed cheeks, can you recognize the smooth, fair visage of Herman Barnhurst? Alas! Herman, your prospect of a West Indian paradise, with Godiva for the queen of your houris, is rather dim just now.

And the sky was above them, the trackless sea all around, the last rays of the red sun in their faces; and not a sail in sight, scan the horizon, Herman, and in vain.

"O! it is horrible to die thus," exclaimed Godiva, in a voice so faint as to be scarcely audible.

But Herman made no reply.

And as the sailors raised their eyes,—wild and fiery from thirst and hunger,—the sun went down, and night came at once upon the scene.

"How beautiful they are,—the stars up yonder, Herman!"

Still Herman did not reply.

Godiva, resting one arm upon his knee, fell into a brief slumber, which was broken by the most incongruous dreams. At length her dreams resolved themselves into a view of Niagara Falls, that world of waters, singing its awful hymn as it plunges into the abyss. She saw the cool water, her face was bathed in the spray, and,—she awoke devoured by maddening thirst.

Herman had moved from her side; he was on the opposite side of the raft, talking with the sailors in low tones. And the sailors looked over their shoulders, with their fiery eyes, as they conversed with Herman.

Again she fell into a doze,—she was with her father this time, and Eugene, her first love, by her side. Happy days!—innocent girlhood!

She awoke with a start,—Herman was still with the sailors, conversing in low tones.

And thus the short night at the tropics wore on. It was near sunrise, and yet very dark, when Godiva was dreaming—dreaming of the night when, yet a pure girl, she was joined in marriage to the brutal sensualist. There was the familiar parlor,—the white-haired father,—the clergyman,—her profligate husband. And the husband bore her again over the threshold, she struggling in his loathed embrace. In the struggle she awoke,—sunrise was warm and bright upon the waters,—and a fresh breeze fanned her burning cheek. Over her stood Herman, his right hand upraised,—the knife which it grasped glittering in the sun.

"The lot has fallen on me!" he cried.

"Herman!" she shrieked—and spread forth her hands. Too late! The knife was buried in her bosom. "Woman you must die to save our lives!"

Godiva never saw anything in this world, after that blow, which was followed by a stream of blood.

"Come! Let us drink!" shouted Her-

man to the sailors, his eyes rolling all wild and mad.

Only one of the sailors came and joined him, in that loathsome draught. In the sunken features of the poor wretch, you but faintly recognize—Arthur Conroy.

The third sailor, rose trembling to his feet,—his cheeks hollowed and his eyes sunken like the others. He folded his arms, and surveyed the three,—the body of Godiva, with Herman and Conroy bending over her.

And then the third sailor, with his great eyes flashing in their sockets, burst into a maniac laugh, and cried,—“A sail! A sail!”

The third sailor was Arthur Dermoyne.

Loathsome as was the draught which they took, it assuaged their thirst, and for a time stilled the madness in their veins. It was, therefore, with a vision somewhat clear, that Herman and Conroy looked up, and beheld a white sail breaking the monotony of the waste.

They turned from the body of the dead woman with loathing. * * * The sail grew nearer, nearer! A signal! “They are lowering a boat,” cried Herman, “we shall be saved!”

“This is the very time of all others that I wished to see,” said Dermoyne, in that husky and unnatural voice,—“your hands are stained with the blood of your paramour,—your heart beats with joy at the sight of a sail,—now go!” And he pushed Herman from the raft, and struck him on the hands, with the hilt of the knife, as the miserable man clutched the timbers.

“Mercy!” cried Herman, again clutching the raft.

Again Dermoyne struck his hands with the hilt of the knife.

“Go! Alice waits for you!”

When the boat from the ship came up, the crew found two men stretched insensible upon the raft, beside the body of a dead woman. As for Herman, he had sunk from sight.

* * * * *

It was June, in the year 1848—

The flush of the summer evening, lay broad and warm upon the river, when an old man came from the cottage door, and passing through the garden gate, bent his

steps toward the oak, which, standing by the shore, caught upon its rugged trunk and wide-branching limbs, the golden rays of the setting sun.

He stood there, with uncovered brow, the breeze tossing his snow-white hairs, and the evening flush warming over his venerable face. By his side, grasping his hand, was a boy of some three years, with a glad, happy face, and sunny hair.

Before the old man and child spread the river, warm with golden light, and white with sails. Yonder the palisades rose up into the evening sky; and behind them, was the cottage, leaning against the cliff, with boughs above its steep roof, vines about its pointed windows, and before its door a garden, from whose beds of flowers a cool fountain sent up its drops of spray, into the evening air. The cottage of Cornelius Berman, just as it was in other days.

Presently the father and the mother of the child came from the garden gate, and approached the oak. A man of twenty-five years, with head placed firmly on his shoulders, and a face whose clear gray eyes, and forehead shaded by brown hair, indicate the artist, the man of genius,—a woman who may be seventeen, who may be twenty, but whose rounded form and pure *wifely* face, link together the freshness of the maiden, the ripe maturity of the woman.

Beside the young wife, walks a young woman, whose form is not so full and rounded in its beauty, but whose pale face, tinted with bloom on the lips and cheek, is lighted by eyes that gleam with a sad, spiritual light. Altogether, a face that touches you with its melancholy beauty, and compares with the face of the wife, as a calm starlit night, with a rosy summer morn.

It is Carl Raphael, his wife, Mary, and his sister, now called Alice, who come to join old Martin Fulmer on the river bank. Declining to touch one dollar of the Van Huyden estate, and determined to earn his bread by the toil of his hand, Carl still had fortune thrust upon him,—for Mary was the only heir of the merchant prince, Evelyn Somers.

"Doctor, I have a letter from father, who is now in Rome," said Carl, as he stood by the old man's side,—and he placed the letter

from his father, the Legate, in Martin Fulmer's hand.

Martin seized the letter, and reading it eagerly, his eye brightening up with the light of the olden time—

"Ah, Carl, he will soon return, he will at last relieve me of the care of the Van Huyden estate! See how hopefully he speaks of the cause of humanity in Europe,—in February, the people of France cast off their chains,—now Italy is awake, and men with the soul of Rienzi and the sword of Washington, direct her destinies,—the Pope, soon to be stripped of his temporal power, will be no longer the tool of brutal tyrants, the prisoner of atheist cardinals, but simply the Head of a regenerated people, simply the first Priest of a redeemed church. Glorious news, Carl; glorious news for us, in this free land; for say what we will, Rome is a heart which never throbs, but that its pulsations are felt throughout the world,"

"How can Rome directly affect us, Doctor?"

"If the absolutist party in that church,—the party who regard Christ but as their stepping-stone to unrestrained and brutal power,—obtain the mastery, then, Carl, the last battle between that party and humanity, will be fought not in Europe, but in this New World. Is there a hill in this land, but is trod by a soldier of Rome? But if the party of Progress in that church,—the party who believe in Christ, and hold the Gospels as the inspired text-book of Democratic truth,—obtain the ascendancy, then, instead of having to battle with the Catholic Church, in this New World, the friends of humanity will find in it, their strongest ally. Good news, Carl! The Pope, the Washington of Italy!"

To which Carl,—happy in that little world of his own, where he lived with his wife and child, afar from the great world,—said simply:—

"Martin, let us wait and see."

* * * * *

Some months after the conversation just recorded, a very brief scene, but full of interest took place in Rome.

Let us pass for a little while from the Empire City to the Eternal City.

In one of the chambers of the Vatican,

late at night, a lamp was faintly burning, its rays struggling among the thick shadows which hung about the lofty walls. Through an open window came a dim, ominous murmur,—the voice of the arisen people of Rome.

A man of some fifty years, whose black hair was plentifully sprinkled with gray, paced up and down the marble floor, pausing every now and then before a door, in the center of the chamber, to which he directed his earnest gaze. Behind that door was the majesty of the Roman Church, 'the representative of God on earth'—the Pope of Rome.

And the solitary watcher, dressed in the plain garb of a simple ecclesiastic, was the Legate who had done the bidding of the Pontiff over half the globe,—the Legate, Gulian Van Huyden.

"Will he turn his back upon the people, and cast himself into the hands of the tyrants? Will he, after his hand has grasped the plow of Human Progress, falter and turn back, and give the power of the church into the hands of the Iscariots of the human race? Can there be any truth in the rumor?"

And again he paused before the door, behind which was the chamber which held the sovereign Pontiff.

That door opened,—the Pope appeared. Clad not in the gorgeous costume which he wears, when high upon his throne, he is carried by his guards, through thousands and tens of thousands of his kneeling worshippers; but clad in a loose robe or gown of dark silk, which, thrown open in front, discloses his bared neck and disordered attire. For with his mild countenance,—a countenance marked by irresolution,—displaying every sign of perturbation, this "representative of God on earth," wears very much the air of one who is about to fly from a falling house.

"There can be no truth in this rumor, which I hear," and the Legate steps forward almost fiercely, addressing the Pope without one word of "majesty," or "holiness,"—"this rumor of flight?"

It is in a soft and tremulous voice, (in Italian of course,) the Pope replies,—

"If I stay, *poison* threatens me from *above*, the *dagger* from *below*."

And then with a gesture, supplicating silence and secrecy on the part of the Legate, the Pope retires and closes the door.

"Significant words! Poison threatens him from above,—from the cardinals,—the dagger from below,—from the people. The danger from the cardinals is not imaginary—there was once a Pope named Ganganelli, who suppressed the Jesuits, and in less than three months died horribly of poison. But the people, Pius? O, Pope without nerve, without faith in God, without hope in man, know you not, that were you to fulfill your apostolate of Liberty, the very women and children of Rome would, in your defense, build around you a rampart of their dead bodies?"

He walked to the window, up to which from the sleepless city, came the voices of arisen Rome:

"God help the Roman people!" he exclaimed; "God confound the schemes of the tyrants, who now plot the murder of the Roman people! At last, after five hundred years of wrong, the Nightmare of Priesthood is lifted from the breast of Italy. Italy has heard at last, the voice of God, calling upon her sons to arise—to cast these priestly idlers from their thrones—to assert the Democracy of the Gospel in face of tyrants of all shapes, whether dressed in military gear, in solemn black, or in Borgian scarlet. Italy has risen!"

And turning from the window, he paced the floor again,—

"My work is done in Rome. The Pope and the church in the hands of crowned and mitred miscreants, who having crushed the last spark of liberty in the Old World, will not be long ere they open their trenches before her last altar in the New World! Away to the New World then; if the battle must come, let us, let the friends of humanity, strike the first blow!"

* * * * *

Away from the eternal city,—to the New World,—to the boundless horizon and ocean-like expanse of the prairies. The sun is setting over one of those vast prairies, which stretch between the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains. The monotony of that vast expanse, covered with grass that rolls and swells, like the wave of old ocean, is broken

by a gentle knoll, crowned by a single giant oak. The setting sun flings the shadow of that solitary tree, black and long, over the prairie. Far, far in the west, a white peak rises like an altar from the horizon, into the sky—it is a peak of the Rocky Mountains. And gazing to the east, you behold nothing save the prairie and the sky,—yes! a herd of buffalo are grazing yonder, and a long caravan of wagons, drawn by mules, and flanked by armed men who ride or go afoot, winds like an immense serpent, far over the plain.

Three hundred emigrants, mechanics, their wives and little ones, who have left the savage civilization of the Atlantic cities, for a free home beyond the Rocky Mountains—such is the band which now moves on in the light of the fading day.

The leader of the band, a man in the prime of young manhood, dressed in the garb of a hunter, with a rifle on his shoulder, stands beneath the solitary oak, gazing upon the caravan as it comes on. His face bears traces of much thought,—perchance of many a dark hour,—but now his eyes shine clear

and strong, with the enthusiasm which springs from deep convictions:

“Thus far toward freedom! Here they come,—three hundred serfs of the Atlantic cities, rescued from poverty, from wages-slavery, from the war of competition, from the grip of the landlord! Thus far toward a soil which they can call their own; thus far toward a free home. And thou, O! Christ, who didst live and die, so that all men might be brothers, bless us, and be with us, and march by our side, in this our exodus.”

The speaker was the Socialist,—Arthur Dermoyne.

And let us all, as we survey the masses of the human race, attempting their exodus from thralldom of all kinds,—of the body,—of the soul,—from the tyranny which crushes man by the iron hand of brute force, or slowly kills him by the lawful operation of capital, labor-saving machinery, or monied enterprise,—let us, too, send up our prayer,—“O! Thou of Nazareth, go with the People in this their exodus, dwell with them in their tents, beacon with light, their hard way to the Promised Land!”

THE END.

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